R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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AN INTRODUCTION TO A CURRICULUM.
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THIS COLLECTION OF PAPERS SERVES AS AN INTRODUCTION TO THE EUCLID ENGLISH DEMONSTRATION CENTER'S JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM. IN ADDITION TO A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM AND OUTLINES OF THE AVERAGE AND HONORS CURRICULA, THE FOLLOWING PAPERS ARE INCLUDED--(1) "THE THEME-CONCEPT UNIT IN LITERATURE," (2) "APPROACHES TO MEANING--A BASIS FOR A CURRICULUM IN LITERATURE," (3) "A CURRICULUM IN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FOR AVERAGE STUDENTS IN GRADES SEVEN, EIGHT, AND NINE," (4) "A UNIT ON THE OUTCAST," (5) "A CURRICULUM IN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FOR JUNIOR HIGH HONORS STUDENTS," (6) "A REMEDIAL PROGRAM FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS," (7) "SOME APPROACHES TO COMPOSITION," (8) "SEMANTICS AND THE JUNIOR HIGH CURRICULUM," AND (9) "THE LANGUAGE PROGRAM." A LIMITED NUMBER OF COPIES OF THIS INTRODUCTION ARE AVAILABLE FROM CHARLES C. ROGERS, PROJECT UPGRADE, SCHOOL DISTRICT OF AIKEN COUNTY, P.O. BOX 771, AIKEN, SOUTH CAROLINA 29801, $0.50. (DL)

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AN INTRODUCTION TO A CURRICULUM

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE EUCLID CENTRAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH CURRICULUM

The English curriculum at Euclid Central Junior High School deals with all the aspects of learning that are generally lumped under the broad title of language arts, but its major emphasis is the development of the student's ability to read and analyze independently. To accomplish this purpose, the curriculum is organized around eight major emphases:

1. Thematic units are based on concepts which are widely applicable to understanding the literature of our culture.
2. The study of these units is made meaningful to the students by selecting works of high interest and by relating the principles to the experience of the student.
3. The unit concepts are developed inductively in order to involve the students in the process of thinking rather than the memorization of facts.
4. The unit develops student independence by gradually weaning him from teacher direction.
5. The unit structure makes use of small group work within the class to give the student freedom from the teacher, peer support, and an opportunity to verbalize his ideas.
6. The curriculum adapts to individual student needs by offering three tracks--remedial, average, and gifted--and by offering works of varying degrees of difficulty within each class.
7. Evaluation is based on the student's ability to apply unit concepts in new problem situations.
8. The curriculum presents the concepts in a structured pattern in which the learning of previous units forms a basis for the units which follow.

The curriculum also deals with the many other kinds of learning that our educational system groups under the rubric English.

1. Students seriously disadvantaged in the basic skills of reading and writing are grouped in remedial classes.
2. Composition both expository and creative is managed as an integral part of each unit.
3. Research and study skills are also developed within the unit framework.
4. The semantic and persuasive aspects of language are developed in special semantics units.
5. Grammar and usage are treated in separate units of language study and in relation to composition.
6. Student publications are widely used to promote student pride and ability in composition. One issue of the school newspaper is produced by each ninth grade class.

The following two pages indicate the topics of the units and the major works the students read. Each literary unit also includes a bibliography from which the students select at least one book to read and analyze independently.

An English Curriculum for Average Students
Euclid Central Junior High School
Euclid, Ohio 44117
1964-65

SEVENTH GRADE

I. Semantics
II. Morphology
III. Definition and Etymology
IV. Animal Stories
  A. Aesop's Fables
  B. The Call of the Wild I
  C. White Fang II
  D. Old Yeller III
  E. Short stories and poetry
V. Man and His Physical Environment
  A. Robinson Crusoe I
  B. Kon-Tiki II
  C. The Raft III
  D. Short stories and poetry
VI. Courage
  A. Death Be Not Proud I
  B. The Diary of a Young Girl II
  C. Shane III
  D. One-act plays
  E. Short stories and poetry
VII. Man and Nature
  A. American Indian myths
  B. Greek myths
  C. Biblical passages
    1. Psalms
    2. Genesis
  D. Poetry and essays
    1. "Almanac for Moderns"
    2. Selections from Pope's "Essay on Man" and Emerson's "Nature"

EIGHTH GRADE

I. Review of Writing Mechanics
II. Syntax
III. Dialects
  A. "What it Was, Was Football" (record)
  B. "Dialects" (film)
  C. Pygmalion
IV. Semantics - "Propaganda Techniques" (film)
V. Definition
VI. Characterization
  A. "Developing Your Character" (film)
  B. "The Man Without a Country"
  C. "The Man Without A Country" (film)
  D. Short stories, poetry, and short prose selections
VII. Coming of Age
  A. Johnny Tremain
  B. The Member of the Wedding I (play)
  C. "Bread" II (play)
  D. "Inside a Kid's Head" III (play)
  E. Short stories
VIII. Justice
  A. Sea Wolf
  B. Short stories and poetry

NINTH GRADE

I. Semantics
II. Change in Language - Biblical passages in Old, Middle, and Modern English
III. Producing a Newspaper
IV. Survival
  A. The Bridge Over the River Kwai I
  B. The Nun's Story II
  C. Men Against the Sea III
  D. Short stories and plays
V. Culture
  A. Anna and the King of Siam I
  B. The Good Earth II
  C. The Light in the Forest III
  D. Anything Can Happen IV
  E. Short Stories
VI. The Outcast and the Group
  A. To Kill a Mockingbird
  B. The Hunchback of Notre Dame (film)
  C. "The Lottery"
  D. Short stories
VII. Social Protest
  A. Magazine articles and essays
  B. American folk songs (records)
    1. "All-Star Hootenanny"
    2. "Songs by Pete Seeger"
  C. Short stories and poetry
VIII. Symbolism
  A. The Pearl
  B. "The Butterfly"
  C. Poetry and fables
  D. Biblical parables

(Most units also include a bibliography from which each student selects an additional novel.)

An English Curriculum for Honors Students
Euclid Central Junior High School
Euclid, Ohio 44117
1964-65

SEVENTH GRADE

I. Semantics
II. Allegory and Symbolism
  A. Fables
  B. Short stories and poetry
III. Courage
  A. Short stories and poetry
  B. "The Raid"
  C. The Apology
  D. Death Be Not Proud
IV. Justice
  A. Short stories by Poe and others
  B. "The Hound of the Baskervilles"
  C. The Merchant of Venice
  D. Records
    1. "Billy Budd"
    2. "Edgar Allan Poe - Tales of Terror"
    3. "The Merchant of Venice"
V. The Physical Environment: Man and Nature
  A. Legends and myths
  B. Short stories and poems
  C. Folk tales
  D. Selections from the Bible and Walden
  E. The Call of the Wild
  F. Robinson Crusoe
VI. Morphology
VII. Definition and Etymology

EIGHTH GRADE

I. Semantics
II. Allegory and Symbolism
  A. Fables and poetry
  B. Allegory of the Cave
  C. King Arthur and Sir Gawain
  D. Twelfth Night
  E. "Love"
  F. The Old Man and the Sea
III. Satire
  A. Selected prose poems and fables
  B. Animal Farm
  C. H.M.S. Pinafore
IV. Man and Society
  A. Selected stories, poems and essays
  B. Great Expectations
  C. A Raisin in the Sun
  D. Bibliography
V. Man and Culture
  A. Selected stories and essays
  B. The Good Earth
  C. The Light in the Forest
  D. Bibliography
VI. The Uses of Power
  A. Selected short stories
  B. Richard III
  C. The Tempest
  D. Bibliography
VII. Syntax
VIII. Dialects - Pygmalion

NINTH GRADE

I. Semantics
II. Allegory and Symbolism
  A. Selected Poems
  B. The Rime of the Ancient Mariner
  C. Selections from essays
  D. Everyman
  E. Lord of the Flies
  F. The Pearl
III. The Mythic Hero
  A. Various heroic myths
  B. Fairy tales
  C. Folk tales
  D. Beowulf
IV. The Epic Hero
  A. El Cid
  B. Song of Roland
  C. The Odyssey
V. The Tragic Hero
  A. Oedipus Rex
  B. Dr. Faustus
  C. An Enemy of the People
VI. The Comic Hero
  A. The Clouds
  B. The Importance of Being Earnest
VII. The Ironic Hero (Protest)
  A. Various essays
  B. The Jungle
VIII. Satire
  A. Selected poems and prose
  B. Huckleberry Finn
IX. Change in the English Language
X. The Newspaper

THE THEME-CONCEPT UNIT IN LITERATURE

by George Hillocks, Jr.

What is the value of the thematic unit? Does the unit have any basis of organization other than the theme? Does the unit treat problems which will arise in the student's later reading and thereby provide a basis for making inferences when the problems do arise? Does the unit systematically develop skill in reading, especially in making inferences involving the theme or concept? If the answers to these questions are negative, then the thematic unit is little better than the older grouping of short stories, poems, and plays, or than a simple linear movement from one work to another with little or no connection of any kind between the works. The following suggested thematic unit framework is a method of teaching the reading of literature which insures both the development of fruitful concepts and the application of these concepts to several works.

The unit can be divided into six major sections 1) development of the concept, 2) application of the concept under the guidance of the teacher, 3) revision of the concept, 4) application of the concept by small groups of students without direct teacher supervision, 5) application of the concept by individual students without teacher guidance, and 6) composition.

1) Development of the Concept or Theme: The theme and concepts are of central importance to the unit. The theme must be selected for its potential interest to the student, for its productivity, and for its importance to the understanding of literature.

Student interest in the theme will necessarily depend upon several factors: the student, the theme, the handling of the unit in class, and the materials used in the unit. If the theme and/or concept of the unit is too abstract or complex, the student's interest will lag, out of frustration. The reluctant student must have materials that are already of interest to him, while the bright student is interested or becomes interested in a wide variety of materials. While the slow, average student may be frustrated in dealing with abstractions for which the concrete examples are unfamiliar, the bright student characteristically likes to play with and argue about abstractions. The extent of student involvement will account for much of the degree of interest in the unit. If students do some of the planning, develop the concepts, and apply the concepts to materials themselves, if there is a maximum of student participation and a minimum of teacher direction, student interest is likely to remain high.

The second criteria, a productive theme or concept, is one which continues to reveal new aspects and ramifications of itself as well as those things to which it is applied. The theme of survival, for instance, is productive in that it involves a multitude of phases and can be applied to a number of situations. A theme such as railroads is less productive unless it could be extended to include the effects of industrialization on modern man.

The third criteria is the importance of the theme to the understanding of literature. A theme such as "survival" which might examine the moral values of the characters and their reactions to critical situations will be of use in the understanding of literary characters and situations of conflict in general.

The concept or theme development may begin in several ways: from the student's own experience, from specially selected readings, or from the research planned and executed by the student. A unit dealing with the theme of courage might capitalize on the student's ideas and experiences. A series of questions about the nature of courage or a series of problematic situations followed by questions can serve both as an introduction to the unit and as a stimulant for the formulation of an extended definition of courage. What is courage? When is a man courageous? Is he courageous only in the face of physical threats? Is he courageous if his primary motivation is to obtain the high regard of others? Is he courageous if his heroism endangers the lives of others? When a few questions such as these have been discussed, the students may wish to invent some problematic situations of their own for class discussion. If the discussion has been preceded by the writing of a definition both teacher and students may now wish to revise it. If not, it is time to formulate a definition.

When the unit concepts are to be derived from reading, the techniques of comparison and contrast are of extreme importance and, in the instance of tragedy, should be used in examining the nature of the tragic hero, his character, his struggle, the plot action, the moral universe suggested by the author, the attitude of the author toward his subject, as well as other elements vital to tragedy. When all of these have been considered, the student is ready both to "lump" and to "split." He should make generalizations concerning tragedy but not without suggesting contrasts. If the process has been successful, then the student is ready to apply his formulation of tragedy to a work which is not so obviously a tragedy.

Some units may be initiated with student planning and library reading. For instance, in a unit on the literature of protest, the teacher may begin by suggesting that much has been written to protest poor social and economic conditions and their effects on people. The teacher may allow the class to decide how they wish to learn about such literature. The students may approach the problem by first reading articles which deal with problems such as slum areas, oppressive labor practices, the problem of segregation, and the causes of juvenile delinquency. After such reading they are much better prepared to approach fiction dealing with these problems.

2) Application of the Concept under the Guidance of the Teacher: After the concept has been introduced and tentatively formulated, the problem for the student is to explore a specific literary work in terms of the concept. In a unit dealing with courage, for instance, students might read a group of short stories in which the characters display various aspects of courage or lack of it in a wide variety of situations. Leo Tolstoy, for example, wrote a story called "The Raid" which he intended as a study of courage, and in which he deals with the Platonic conception of courage. In this particular story various characters react in different ways in the same situation. Each displays a kind of courage or lack of it. The students can move from a story such as "The Raid" which analyzes courage to one in which courage is important, but which displays the traditional cliches about courage. The student's attention can then be directed to the differences in the author's approach. Further stories or poems might be selected to demonstrate courage in situations which are not primarily physical: stories in which the conflict is moral, psychological, or intellectual. Careful examination of such stories will lead to re-evaluation of the original definition developed by the students, since their definition, more than likely, involved only the conventional stereotypes of courage.

In a unit dealing with tragedy, the length of any one tragedy precludes the application of the concept to more than one or two works. The choice of a play or book which is not clearly tragic seems to be most productive because the student is placed in a position which forces him to evaluate through comparison and contrast. In examining a play such as The Emperor Jones the student must consider problems such as the following: Is the play a tragedy? In what way is the play tragic? In what way is it not tragic? How does Jones differ from the classical tragic hero of Greek and Elizabethan tragedy? How have the concerns of the dramatist changed since Elizabethan times? What does the use of the falling plot action of tragedy for a hero like Jones reveal about the modern concepts of man and of tragedy? In short, the students' thinking should focus on how meaning is revealed in the similarities and dissimilarities of form--form in a sense broad enough to include, in this case, the stature and character of the hero and the moral universe depicted.

In the unit dealing with the literature of protest, after reading explicit protest against various kinds of social ills, the student should be confronted with the problem of discovering how protest is conveyed in fiction or poetry. For instance, the students may be asked to analyze Upton Sinclair's The Jungle with regard to the causes and manifestations of social ills. The students should also examine both the explicit and implicit utopian situations in contrast to the explicitly described evil.

3) Revision of the Concept: Whatever the concept, it can be revised at this

point or some other point in the unit, or the teacher and class may decide that no revision is necessary. The unit on courage leads naturally to revision. The definition of tragedy developed by the students can be revised in light of short essays written by established critics such as those in the Signet volume Eight Great Tragedies. The unit on the literature of protest probably demands the building of a second concept concerned with how a writer of fiction conveys his protest.

Explicit provision for revising does not imply that revision need take place only once. Ideally, revision should be a continual process and any concept which does not lend itself to continual growth and whose outer limits may be reached quickly and without effort is probably not able to support a unit. Such limited concepts tend to stagnate and fail to offer either the teacher or the class fresh insights.

(4) Application of the Concept by Small Groups: There are three significant reasons for analysis of material by small groups of students.

First, the division of the class into small groups reduces the amount of assistance that can be offered by the teacher but increases the responsibility of the student. The student can no longer rely completely on the teacher, but at the same time, he is not cast completely adrift; he can still rely upon the assistance of his fellow students.

Second, the small group situation is highly motivational. The questions are asked, and the problems are raised by students who alone are responsible for answers and solutions. Nearly every student in a small group becomes involved in discussion, while in a teacher-led class discussion, only a few students become actively involved. In a small group, many of the inhibitions to class response are released; there is no authority figure to criticize; only a few people can laugh; and a student is not likely to be overawed by those he considers his peers. In addition, of course, this technique breaks the monotony of the teacher-led, class discussion.

Third, use of the small group enables the teacher to provide at least partially for differences in ability. It would be absurd to assume that it is possible to find material suited to the individual needs of every student in the class--to find, for instance, thirty poems on the same theme ranked in thirty gradations of difficulty. It is sometimes frustrating to find poems on four levels of difficulty when there is a concomitant need for the poems to have a particular common theme. The task, however, is not impossible. And the patient seeker who finds three or four poems, short stories, or books on levels suitable for his class will find that he is able to challenge the bright student without frustrating the slow. The teacher will also find that each student in thw class will have opportunity for success working with material close to his own level.

There is no need to fear that the procedure of giving different material to different students will result in either chaos or failure to improve reading. Nor is there a difficulty because the teachers at one grade level will not know what the students at another level have read. In the first place, students rapidly become used to reading material other than what their friends read. In the second place, students can only learn to read by reading material they can handle. If we give students material which is out of their range and which they cannot or will not read, we deprive them of an opportunity to read and thereby to improve their skill.

5) Application of the Concepts by Individual Students: The final phase of the unit serves two very important functions; it provides for purposeful independent reading, and it serves as an evaluation of the unit. At this stage of the unit the teacher should have a large number of books or short works available. If there is sufficient material, every student may read a work which has special appeal for him and is suited to lhis reading ability.

The student of course should be able to analyze independently the work he chooses, and his analysis should be in terms of the unit concepts as well as any other ideas he has dealt with previously. Naturally if a student has never dealt with tragedy as an idea or genre, he should not be expected to include that idea in his analysis. But if, for instance, he is dealing with a tragedy and has already dealt with the ideas of courage and epic, he should bring both to bear in his

analysis. If the teacher is aware of concepts developed in previous units, it is an easy matter to help the student relate them to new materials and ideas.

This final activity serves as an evaluation of the success of the unit. If the student's analysis consists of a plot summary and a few superficial comments on the courage of the protagonist, the unit has probably been a failure, at least for him. Naturally there should be different expectancies for different students. It is not necessary that every student do a penetrating and discriminating synthesis in his final analysis. We can expect great things from bright students, but we must accept the slow student's sincere efforts, however weak they may be. If the slow student can answer a question such as "In what ways was Jack courageous?" and in answering can cite examples from the text, perhaps the teacher can ask no more of him.

If the students of average reading ability cannot apply the concepts satisfactorily, the teacher has a strong indication that he has failed somewhere. Perhaps, the unit is too difficult for the class. Perhaps the teacher failed to motivate the students. Perhaps the specific reading materials were too difficult. Any number of things might have been at fault, and the teacher must revise the unit according to his analysis. But if the student understands the concepts, can formulate his own study questions in terms of them, and can analyze a work in reference to the concepts, then the unit may be judged successful.

6) Composition: Although discussed last, composition is not intended as a concluding activity. On the contrary, a unit constructed in the manner suggested offers a number of opportunities for composition and in certain places demands composition activities. Obviously, the bias of units constructed in this way emphasizes expository writing, but there are a number of opportunities for creative writing--from personal narrative and the short story to stylized verse forms and free verse.

These six phases comprise a kind of unit which includes concept development, both intensive and extensive reading, and composition experience. If the concepts of the unit are fruitful, they will illuminate the various readings throughout the unit; and if the structure of the unit is effective, the student will learn to read and evaluate independently.

APPROACHES TO MEANING: A BASIS FOR CURRICULUM IN LITERATURE

by George Hillocks, Jr.

By the time the average student enters junior high school he has very nearly attained all the skill in reading he will ever need to glean the content of his daily newspaper, his magazines, and whatever other popular literature he may encounter. His basic sight vocabulary has been long established and he does not block on unfamiliar words. He can read for main ideas and important details and can make simple inferences about what he reads. From the seventh grade on, many curricula, if they focus on skills at all, simply proliferate what has already been learned and frequently, in a zealous attempt to force the student to read with care, add the skill of reading for unimportant details. This writer once witnessed a test on The Scarlet Letter containing fifty questions, such as "What was the name of Hester's jailer?" In curricula such as these the real problems of meaning are either ignored or handled by the teacher in a series of lectures abstracted from his college or graduate school notes. The student is not only deprived of an opportunity of interpreting meaning for himself, but is under the necessity of adhering to the interpretation suggested by the teacher. Thus the student soon believes that the meaning of a poem or story is akin to the secrets of ancient religions, closely guarded by a high priesthood in the innermost sanctum of a stone temple far from the view of the peasant world. The student is content to listen to the interpretations of the priesthood, and after years of acclimation to this procedure he is revolted by an unorthodox priest who may ask him questions without ever answering them. And new priests brought up in this tradition develop guilt complexes if they do not systematically present the predigested daily interpretation.

What is it then that leads the teacher to believe that he and his colleagues but not the students are capable of dealing with problems of meaning and interpretation? Is it that students are innately incapable of interpretation? Is it that below a certain level of "maturity" a student is unable to cope with problems of meaning? Or is it simply that the student does not possess the techniques for making systematic inquiry into meaning because he has never been exposed to a systematic approach to problems of meaning?

How can the student be taught to understand the meaning of a literary work whether it be in print or produced on stage or in the movies? What tools or concepts must he, as an educated reader, have acquired? Jerome Bruner in The Process of Education suggests that the structure of the subject matter should be central to our teaching. He assumes that learning structure is more important than learning details because a knowledge of structure may be transferred from one problem-solving situation to another. If Bruner's assumption is correct and if literature has a discoverable structure, it should be possible to teach that structure thereby giving the student an invaluable tool for the continuation of his literary education beyond the formal school situation.

In literature three structural areas are evident immediately. The first deals with the picture of man produced by a writer, the second with levels of meaning, and the third with form or genre. Familiarity with the concepts of each of these areas will provide the reader with a background and an awareness for making complex inferences and for asking himself the kinds of questions whose answers reveal a fullness of meaning.

A. Man in His Environment. The serious writer is concerned with the relationship of man to his environment, which for the sake of simplification can be separated into three foci--the physical, the social, and the cultural environment. In reality, of course, these three are inseparable, each contributing to and interacting with the others to form a matrix of influences which operate dynamically in the formation of the character, desires, and aspirations of man. Since the author's task involves a commentary on man, his work necessarily involves the relationship of man to his environment--a relationship which may be seen lying somewhere in the continuum extending from man as controller of his environment, as in the case of the mythic protagonist in works such as the

Promethean stories, to man as subject of his environment, as in the case of the modern protagonist in works such as Death of a Salesman. No character in any work can be completely abstracted from his environmental setting, for even the values of the mythical hero who is basically in command of his environment are influenced by the environment.

In many instances the full understanding of a work requires an acquaintance with the organization of environment. A reader unaware of class distinctions and the functioning of status in the social environment will miss the full irony of a poem as simple as "Richard Cory." A failure to understand the operation of culture and to realize that a cultural setting imposes a set of values on its members which may not be appropriate to the members of another culture leads to a lack of sympathy for a character such as Wang Lung in The Good Earth and to a failure to identify the cultural struggle integral to The Light in the Forest. When we say that a student is not mature enough to read a particular book or poem or to see a play, perhaps we actually mean that there are certain concepts involved in the work with which he is unfamiliar and that his ignorance of these will impede or preclude his comprehension. Many of the concepts which give rise to difficulty, among them those of environment, can be taught systematically.

Arbitrary separation of the areas comprising the concept of environment simplifies analysis, promotes understanding, and facilitates teaching. At the same time, however, it is essential that we realize the inseparability of physical, cultural, and social aspects of environment. Units emphasizing the environmental aspects of literature include: Animal Stories (seventh grade average curriculum), Man and Nature (seventh grade average), Man and His Physical Environment (seventh average and honors), Man and Society (eighth honors), Man and Culture (eighth honors), Survival (ninth average), Culture (ninth average), The Outcast (ninth average), and Social Protest (ninth average).

B. Levels of Meaning. The concept that meaning exists in a literary work on multiple levels is a very useful one if used within the condition that no one meaning can be totally isolated from the other levels of meaning within the work. No abstraction, no precis, no analysis can ever represent more than a fraction of the total meaning contained in the work itself. But if we are to deal with meaning and to communicate about meanings, it is essential to deal in abstractions, abstractions concerning the kinds of meaning involved in a story, poem, novel, or drama.

Because of the impossibility of extracting a particular level of meaning from the matrix of meaning in which it appears, any attempt to describe levels of meaning must necessarily be normative, dealing with tendencies rather than absolutes, and ignoring overlappings for the sake of general distinctions.

The first and most obvious level of meaning may be called the plot level or literal level, the level at which tings happen whether the events and agents are represented as real or not. At this level the reader is involved with understanding events, cause and effect, relationships between characters and between the character and his physical, social, and cultural environment. The reader is concerned here with identifying the referents, real or imaginary, which the words, as signs or elementary symbols, represent, individually or in combination.

Any work of prose or poetry has what we have called the literal level--the level at which things happen. But this level does not necessarily represent reality; that is, the words as signs or elementary symbols do not necessarily represent something outside the work. Northrop Frye draws a distinction here between works which are primarily intended to represent reality and those which are primarily imaginative. In the former, the referents of the symbols are outside the work, and the meaning is extensional. In the latter, the imaginative works, the referents of the signs are within the work itself, and the meaning is intensional. In imaginative works the significance of a character is dependent on his relationship to the other aspects of the work. In biography, on the other hand, the significance of the people portrayed is dependent on the accuracy of the portrayal in terms of reality.

In the literary work, how does an author achieve levels of significance beyond plot level? Perhaps it is better to phrase the question differently: Through what devices or techniques do levels of meaning become noticeable? To some extent such devices may be described in terms of a hierarchy, extending from the base of tone and metaphor to the universal symbols of archetype.

Tone is used to achieve secondary levels of meaning, especially in satire. In satire of the formal variety, the satirist, whether the author or a character of his creation, pronounces stinging diatribes and harangues against the targets of his wrath. In this kind of satire the objects of criticism and the reasons for criticism are quite apparent. In more subtle satire, in which irony is the chief instrument of the satirist, the criticism is not always self-evident, and the burden of interpretation is left to the reader. In ironic statements the reader must understand the contrast between what is implied to be good and the reverse. He must understand that the criticism is in terms of implied good in contrast to what is directly stated as good because of the system of values adopted by men but disapproved by the author. In the case of exaggeration, the process of interpretation is much simpler. The author simply carries vices and foibles to their logical extremes, a technique which in itself suggests norms of conduct which the author approves.

At the level of allegorical symbol, the reader is presented with a relatively rigid symbol whose significance can readily be grasped by the reader. For instance, in a medieval morality play, Gluttony might be represented by a fat man riding a hog across the stage holding a bottle of wine in one hand and a side of bacon in the other. In contrast to the allegorical symbol, the symbols in works such as Moby Dick, The Scarlet Letter, and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" tend to be less rigid and to represent a syndrome of meaning. They may or may not be related to other symbols in the same work, and every event, object, and agent in the work is not necessarily symbolic. To suggest that a symbol of this type represents a single idea is to be guilty of oversimplification. To say that Moby Dick represents evil and the Mariner represents a repentant sinner is to ignore the ramifications of both. Such symbols ordinarily do not depend upon public acceptance of conventional symbolic values; rather the symbol is developed throughout the context of the work as the author suggests symbolic meaning through the interplay of various elements in his work.

The value of the archetype or universal symbol depends neither upon local convention nor upon the author's manipulation of his material; rather, its meaning is dependent upon its universal recurrence in the life patterns of mankind. Such symbols seem to arise out of basic needs, desires, and experiences common to all men of all cultures. The most famous archetype, that of death and rebirth, which Maud Bodkin tells us is present in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and which other critics have seen in other works, is central to all of the great and many of the minor religions. Many archetypes figure most prominently in myth where we find those of the birth of the hero; the pattern of his journey, task, and return; the crone who refurbishes the powers of the hero; and the mother goddess from whom blessings flow.

Finally, we arrive at a level of meaning which must be understood in terms of all of the foregoing phases or levels; the theme. At this level the reader is concerned with the interplay of plot, tone, symbol, and archetype--with the total meaning of a work. This does not imply that one can deal adequately with plot, tone, and symbol individually without reference to the total context. It means simply that any consideration of theme necessitates consideration of all elements of the work.

The foregoing analysis is too brief to be complete and too simple to be thorough. Nevertheless it may serve as an outline whose details and complexities can be elaborated from conventional sources of critical theory. Units emphasizing levels of meaning include: Semantics (seventh, eighth, and ninth grade average and honors curriculum), Allegory and Symbolism (seventh, eighth, and ninth honors), Symbolism (ninth average), Satire (eighth honors), and The Satirist (ninth honors).

C. Genre. The third approach to meaning is through genre or form, but not

form in the sense of novel, short story, poetry and drama. An analysis of form in this sense reveals little, if any, meaning and what little is revealed generally is not of use in reading another selection. Further, a knowledge of one genre can be brought to bear upon another. A single literary work may involve the characteristics of two or more genres. Alvin Kernan points out that Timon of Shakespeare's tragedy is the satirist of formal verse satire taken to his logical extreme. Northrop Frye, in his essay on satire, suggests the proximity of satire to tragedy. "The sardonic vision," he says, "is the seamy side of the tragic vision." Hamlet's bungling revenge brings about such a bloodbath that the play approaches satire. It would be easier to produce "Titus Andronicus" as a burlesque than as a tragedy.

Knowledge of genre, including such concepts as structure, character, imagery, tone, and purpose, can be the basis for making inferences not only about works within a particular genre, but about works which may incorporate the characteristics of several genres or which may contrast to one of the genres.

So much has been written by scholars concerning the characteristics of the major genres--epic, tragedy, comedy, satire, elegy, pastoral, etc.--that to present their formal characteristics here would be unnecessary and pretentious. The point for the teacher and the curriculum builder has been made: a knowledge of genres illuminates literary meaning. Units emphasizing genre include: (eighth grade honors curriculum) Satire; (ninth grade honors curriculum) The Mythic Hero, The Epic Hero, The Tragic Hero, The Comic Hero, The Ironic Hero, and The Satirist.

A curriculum based on these three areas--environment, levels of meaning, and genre--would of necessity introduce the least complex and abstract concepts first. Students who possess the basic reading skills can examine man's relationship to his physical environment as it appears in short stories, poems, and longer works of fiction and biography. Additional units of work at a similar level might focus on the courageous and just man. Beyond these, additional units concerned with man in the process of becoming and with man in relation to other men (as family member, as outcast, and as leader) will lead to an objectified examination of man in his society and of man in his culture.

Materials for teaching the simple aspects of symbolism to bright students can be utilized effectively as early as the seventh grade. Beginning with a discussion and an analysis of the meanings and uses of conventional symbols, the students can move to the interpretation of simple fables and parables or other simple allegories whose symbols are rigid and singular, involving only a one to one relationship between symbol and the thing symbolized. At later grade levels the symbols with which a student works can become increasingly less rigid and more complex while the clues which an author offers for interpretation can become fewer and fewer. The student will eventually be ready to deal with a spectrum of allegory ranging from a work like Everyman, in which there is a maximum of clues for interpretation, to a work like The Four Quartets, in which clues are at a minimum. For the average student, however, the abstraction of objectified work with levels of meaning seems to prevent the introduction of even the easiest concepts and materials until the ninth grade level.

An examination of genre, the third area, can be undertaken by students of superior intellectual ability before the average student can approach it. There are three reasons for this. First, the idea of genre is abstract. Second, if the teaching is to be done inductively the complexity of the major genres demands that a number of ideas be dealt with simultaneously. Third, the materials which compose the classical genres are often difficult reading in themselves. The average student might deal with simple genre-like forms, comparing and contrasting plot, character, setting, tone, and moral universe to induce the characteristics of the form. But any careful consideration of the classical genre should probably be withheld until the ninth or tenth grade, at which time aspects of comedy and satire might be introduced. The other genres can follow later, depending, of course, upon the depth in which they are examined, the nicety of the discrimination demanded, the sophistication of the student, and the care with which the particular unit of work is structured.

At any rate, these three areas--environment, levels of meaning, and genre--provide the basis for a curriculum which, as a concomitant of good teaching, ought to produce not merely readers who read with comprehension in the conventional sense but readers who are able to focus a multitude of concepts from a variety of sources upon a single work--readers who take much to a work and glean more from it. Their reading will not be a linear movement from one book to another, but a phramidal synthesis of all their reading.

A CURRICULUM IN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FOR AVERAGE STUDENTS IN GRADES SEVEN, EIGHT, AND NINE

by George Hillocks, Jr.

The most important deficiency of the content centered curriculum whose objective is to convey cultural heritage is that it fails to prepare the student to read independently. His experience in reading a few specific titles without regard to applying the learning gained in reading those titles to a new but similar reading situation offers no carry-over--no assurance that a particular reading experience will be of benefit in the next. Thus the curriculum tends to be a be-all and end-all as far as cultural heritage goes. The content of the works is not used as a basis to promote the continued growth of the student's knowledge.

The typical skills program on the other hand tends to neglect ideas and content, perhaps because the concept of skills has not developed beyond word attack, reading for main ideas and important details, inference making, and reading for relationships. The usual skills program does not recognize the value of ideas in making inferences. It is necessary, for instance, to know something about class structure before making inferences about a character's class standing and the problems he faces because of it.

A content program has as its objective the reading of a given number of short stories, poems, plays, and novels. The teacher's attention centers in each individual work, and the student begins to realize that the best way to pass the course is to know the specific works. On the other hand, the skills program utilizes exercises and drill to develop specific reading skills without making a conscious effort to apply the ideas and concepts underlying one work to those underlying another.

The curriculum in literature developed at Euclid Central Junior High School attempts to integrate the two points of view. It views aspects of literary interpretation as skills to be applied in later reading. It utilizes the thematic and conceptual content of a particular work in the analysis of another. Thus content is of prime importance only as it provides background for later reading and contributes to the development of skill. The teacher is not concerned so much with the content of specific works as he is with the student's ability to make certain interpretative statements and to solve problems in connection with each succeeding work. Perhaps the difference is nowhere more apparent than in the tests administered in each program. In the content program the tests are concerned with the particular works read and discussed in class and frequently test knowledge of only main ideas and important and unimportant details. In the skills program the tests are concerned with ability to read for main ideas, important details and inferences which require no specific literary background. But in the Euclid Central program the tests present problems and questions similar to those dealt with in a particular unit but in relation to material which has not previously been read by the class. Such a test evaluates not only the students but the unit of work. If the students perform well, the teacher may assume that the unit has been successful. Naturally there will be different goals for students of different abilities, but all goals will be concerned with putting learning into action and not with recall.

If the major objective of the literature program is to build the student's ability to understand and interpret literature, the curriculum maker must decide how this objective can be most effectively achieved. He must decide how to structure the curriculum.

The structure of any curriculum in literature should be determined by the endeavor to fulfill the objectives of the curriculum. If the objective for the student is to understand and interpret the meaning of literature, we must ask what is essential to such meaning. A knowledge of the structure of literature--that is, the integrated use of character, plot, form, connotation, and symbol to

create a literary work--is necessary to understanding. The literary artist places characters endowed with physical capabilities, personalities, and values in an environment where they encounter conflicts. As the work progresses the characters strive to resolve the conflict and in so doing reveal in themselves qualities which the author believes are basic to the nature of man. Of course the author may choose to introduce no present conflict so that we simply see a character in an environment. In this case the conflict is either in the past tense or in the passive voice, for the character has either already yielded or has never dared to oppose the restricting force. hen the conflict is explicit , the character may resolve it in several ways or fail to resolve it. First of all, the conflict may be resolved externally or internally or both. The narrative figure may make inner adjustments which have the effect of resolution--adjustments which involve acceptance of fate, an increase in emotional maturity, or decisions to overcome personal difficulties. This internal resolution ordinarily and sometimes necessarily precedes external resolution of conflict; the narrative figure must overcome internal problems, must come to terms with himself, before coping with external problems. Odysseus's successful confrontation of the obstacles throughout his journey symbolizes an increase in his inner powers and prepares for his eventual restoration of order to Ithaca by expelling the suitors. The action undertaken by the narrative figure to resolve the conflict reflects not only his value system and character but the attitude of the author toward the narrative figure; and these in combination with the environment or situation and the conflict engender the theme of the work.

Thus, for purposes of organizing the curriculum, we can discuss seven phases of literary structure which the student must understand in order to understand the whole: attributes of character, determinants of character, situation or environment, conflict, action, values, and theme. Attributes of character include those virtues, vices,fears, and aggressions possessed by men as well as by literary characters. In contrast determinants are those forces which mold character and bring about the attributes. Many characters come to the page with their attributes formed, ready for acceptance by the audience; in a serious work the author is frequently concerned with those forces which mold the attributes both previous to and during the course of the narrative. The environment or situation into which the character is plunged includes both distant and immediate aspects, that is, both the larger socio-cultural environment as well as the microcosm which encompasses the specific locale and the particular personae of the story. The conflict always grows out of this situation and varies because of it. The character may be pitted against the physical, cultural, or social aspects of the environment, against other men or groups, against himself, the gods, or fate. The action taken to resolve the conflict reveals the value system of the narrative figure as well as additional insights into character. Finally, the theme is an encapsulation of what the narrative means as seen through all the foregoing.

Experience has shown that while students have little difficulty in specifying character attributes, environment, conflict, and action when these are primarily physical, they have much more difficulty when the situation becomes other than physical. The student can see conflict between an outcast and a group, but the causes of ostracism may escape him completely. Social and cultural conflict are subtle, and while not out of the student's experience, need to be objectified for his examination. Character determinants require a similar objectification so that the student may think about how a character came to be the way he is. Inferring values of characters promises difficulty for the student even when the narrative is only slightly above that of the TV western or detective melodrama. Theme presents a similar problem in the concept itself,not to mention formulation of statements of theme. The units developed in the curriculum for average students at Euclid Central Jr. H. S.,while involving each of the seven phases, focu: on or approach the narrative from a particular phase. Seventh grade units on Courage and Justice focus on attributes of character,

while the seventh grade unit on Man and Physical Environment, the eighth grade unit on Coming of Age, and the ninth grade unit on Man and Culture deal with determinants of character. The ninth grade unit on Survival primarily concerns the value systems of characters as they take action to resolve physical and moral conflict in social, economic and physical situations. The Outcast, another ninth grade unit, focuses upon conflict of a special kind--that between an individual and the group. At the same time the units on the Outcast, Man and Physical environment, and Man and Culture focus on man in a particular environmental situation. Although each unit includes attention to the actions of the characters in resolving the conflict and what the actions reveal about the characters, and although each unit deals with the themes of individual works within the unit, there are no specific units focusing upon action or theme as such. And while some units deal with special kinds of conflict, i.e., outcast vs. group, man vs. culture, man vs. nature, no unit deals specifically with the function of conflict in literature.

Of course, each unit encompasses all seven phases. The Outcast unit is concerned with the attributes of the outcast as well as the attributes of the group which rejects him. It examines the determinants of character in examining the effects of ostracism. The situation in which the outcasting takes place is of special importance and may be a prime factor bringing about the conflict. In this unit the action taken to resolve the conflict is ordinarily taken by the group. The action taken by the individual is frequently covert but sometimes aggressive. The values of the two agents, in this case the rejecting group and the rejected character, are usually in conflict and may be the ultimate causes of the ostracism. Through an examination of all these in a particular work, the students' attention is then directed to the theme of that work.

The units enumerated above by no means represent all the units possible or necessary to include in a curriculum. Careful consideration of the seven phases of structure will suggest additional units which can be included at the junior or senior high levels. Some may be included for review of concepts, others to facilitate the student's understanding of particular aspects of future reading. The real justification for including a particular unit is a positive answer to the question of whether the concepts developed in the unit will aid the student in his understanding the meaning of literature.

A UNIT ON THE OUTCAST

by Lynn Reppa

"The life to which she fled flung her back, cast her out. The happiness she had hoped for soon faded. The flowers she had dreamed of became thorns." This quotation from the story "The Outcast" by I. L. Peritz expresses a predominant theme in literature. Great literary characters are often flung back and have their flowers turned to thorns. The teen-age student, too, often feels flung back, as though his flowers have turned to thorns. Thus the theme is close to the student as well as to the writer. The students in a unit dealing with the ostracized individual become aware of the violence of the group and begin to understand the lonely individual. The unit described below seeks to promote sensitivity to the individual cast out from the group, to develop understanding of the pressures and norms of the group, and to provide a background for understanding the theme of the individual's relationship to the group in literature.

The unit's introductory short story, "Born of Man and Woman," offers such a horribly grotesque outcast that it shocks the student into an interest in the unit. The story is given the students with no introduction and after the students read the story, many questions arise: Does this really happen? Are people ever really treated like this? Why was he so different? These questions lead directly into a discussion of the student's knowledge of similar situations in his reading and in his personal experience. The discussion builds logically from a discussion of physical causes of ostracism to racial causes which are both obvious and omnipresent in our society. These in turn lead to ethnic differences as a basis for ostracism and social rejection. Thus this introductory short story provides the basis for ostracism and social rejection. Thus this introductory short story provides the basis for relating the concepts of the unit to the student's experience and for developing his understanding of the extent of the problem area.

When class discussion reaches the problem of ethnic differences, the students read "The Charivari," which is the story of a man ostracized because of his nationality. The teacher focuses the class discussion of the story on the ethnic differences already touched upon in class discussion, and extends the discussion to include the group norm which made this particular man different from his peers. This story also introduces the concept of the scapegoat and the psychology of prejudice--the group need for a common scapegoat, the mob reaction against a common scapegoat, the means of protection the scapegoat uses to counteract the group, and the ignorance and lack of familiarity which gives rise to prejudice. The teacher draws these concepts from the students with questions rather than presenting the information in lecture since the ability to make this type of inference in future reading will depend upon the student's experience, not upon the teacher's direction. Vocabulary presents a difficulty to the teacher at this point since the students are not equipped with the key words which identify the unit concepts. If the vocabulary develops naturally from the class at this point, or if the class is more sophisitcated than most in language, some of the more familiar and simpler words are introduced at this point. However, the teacher emphasizes the students' understanding of the complex experiences which underlie these labels rather than emphasizing the labels themselves.

The students are next introduced to various kinds of outcasts through a variety of short stories. Students study the stories individually with the aid of a study guide, but the class discussion which follows each story directs the student's attention toward the unit concepts. These stories not only reveal the overt ethnic, physical, social, racial and religious differences of individuals who are victimized by the group, but also penetrate into the psychology of the group itself and the personal fears and deficiencies of its members which give rise to such victimizing. In "The Outcast," from which the opening quotation was taken, such questions as "Why was Hannah outcast" From what groups was she outcast? What are the group norms and standards which made her different?" objectify many of the concepts to be developed. Through these short stories the students become aware of the types of outcasts reflected in literature.

The major concepts to be developed through the reading of short stories are not rigid; they are rather a growing body of knowledge of the outcast, the group, and their interaction, which might best be pictured in the form of a wheel. The hub, the center of interest, is the outcast, the ostracized person or persons. The group which has ostracized the individual, the environment, is the rim. The spokes connecting the two--the interaction of both, the reaction of each--are the concepts to be developed. The student grows in his understanding of the individual--his loneliness, his acceptance of his fate, his inability to function in a group, his fear or his courage, his compensation for lack of group function--through the direction of study guides and discussions: What was the difference between Big Lannie's and Raymond's reaction to their being ostracized, Why did they react differently? How did the girl protect herself from the group? Is a fantasy world a safe retreat? The readings, study guide questions, and the class discussions lead to understanding the group with its prejudices, its common scapegoating, its change of attitude, and its pressures. Each reading emphasizes a particular aspect of the problem, and as the student grows through his reading, the teacher guides the discussion to synthesize and objectify his ideas in order to prepare him for future, more independent reading. As the unit develops, some of these relationships will be expanded, some will be added, and all will be given appropriate names. However, the student should be kept in constant awareness of the interaction of the group and the individual which forms the basis for his learning.

After the student has read the short stories and inductively developed the major concepts of the unit, the more sophisticated vocabulary may be introduced and studies as a related skill. For example, prejudice may be studied as a prefix-root construct from pre-judge. Through his vicarious experiences in reading, the student has made certain assumptions and correlated certain ideas. Now he can name them. The person who before has been called "different" can now be referred to as the outcast. The group which has ostracized him for some reason can now be called a group with a prejudice. The vocabulary can be developed until all the terms of the unit have been introduced: ethnic, scapegoat, ostracize, etc. At this point the teacher presents a brief talk dealing with the historical, social, and psychological significance of the scapegoat. The history of scapegoating makes an interesting subject when studied from the historical viewpoint--primitive tribes through modern mobs. The student becomes aware of the innate forces and the learned patterns of common scapegoating. The forces which control prejudices are also studies as part of this lesson.

Present day examples of the outcast and scapegoat make good material for student writing. Students collect and bring to class appropriate stories from current magazines and newspapers. The stories and articles are then discussed from the point of view of the unit: Why was the victim ostracized? How? What group norms lay behind his ostracism? Are such norms acceptable elsewhere? The discussion of these articles is related to situations in which the student has been ostracized or has done the ostracizing, or to situations in which he has observed one of the processes. While studying the articles on outcasting, the techniques of the newspaper writer are discussed, and different types of writing are analyzed: editorial writing, feature writing, and news writing. The student then selects a situation to express creatively, and writes his story in one of the three forms. In this manner, the student is reinforcing his knowledge of the concepts of the unit through personal writing, and learning another form of writing through experience with it.

To increase the students' independence in reading and analysis, students read "The Snow Goose." Each student, after reading the story and answering the questions on the study guide, is asked to write a paper discussing some of the themes developed in this particular story. Teachers and students can set up topics for the written discussion: Rhayader, as an outcast from society, builds his life around Fritha and the world of Nature (for slow students): Rhayader and the snow goose are parallel characters in this story of the outcase (for middle ability students): and the snow goose has symbolic meaning (for high ability students).

At this point it is necessary to evaluate the students' ability to deal independently with the concepts presented. Some students will not be ready to proceed

on their own, and these students receive individual help with particular stories or do group work with one or two stories; the concepts discussed should be basic. For the students ready to proceed on their own, "The Blue Hotel" may be assigned with a study guide, and the students allowed to proceed independently, developing the ideas and patterns of the story. This story offers a particular challenge to advanced students, as it deals with the idea of an individual removing himself from the group. Some interesting discussion questions develop from the story: the significance of "Blue" in the story, a comparison of "Richard Cory" and the Swede, and scapegoating as a common bond for friendship.

This division into small groups functions not only to meet the levels of ability of students in the class, but also to give the students an opportunity to work in peer groups with less teacher direction. In addition, it offers a chance for verbalizing and testing ideas with other students. This structure also frees the teacher to give special attention to particular students, as mentioned above.

When a majority of students seem to be cognizant of the concepts, the students can now move into the reading of poetry. Poetry is a more difficult level on which to develop ideas because the clues to meaning given in a selection are minimal. All the students read all the poems with the teacher, and the class divides into groups according to their selections. They examine them in terms of the following: the reason for outcasting (ethnic, social, physical, religious, racial), the reaction of the outcast, the attitude of the author toward the outcast and the group, the norms of the group, and the norms of the outcast. Each group then presents a discussion of its poem to the rest of the class. Each person in the group participates in the presentation, if only to read the poem to the class.

There is only one core novel used in this unit, <u>To Kill a Mockingbird</u>, because it seems to fit the interests and understanding of most students. After the book and study guide are distributed to the class, the teacher introduces the book by discussing social problems in a small southern town and the problems of children reared without a mother. The students are given some time in class to read the book; class, large group, and small group discussions are used to reinforce and develop concepts presented in the book. When the students have completed the novel, a series of discussion questions dealing with the major problems of the novel may be treated individually in compositions or in class and small group discussions. Scout Finch was an outcast because of her age; the Negro population of Maycomb was the victim of prejudice; and Boo Radley was a victim of scapegoating are statements which might be points of departure for discussions and compositions.

The student should now be able to work with the unit problems on his own, and for this purpose the student is given a bibliography of books which treat the outcast theme. The student selects a book, reads it in terms of the unit concepts, formulates his ideas, and develops a written analysis of the book.

At the conclusion of the unit, the student has had experiences with outcasting as a literary theme. He has read poetry, short stories, novels and newspaper stories. He has worked with the concepts in a class, as part of a group and on an individual level. He has had experience in creative and expository writing. Through these various experiences, the student will be better able to understand in mature, literary masterpieces the sensitivity of an individual and the pressures which the group exerts upon him.

A CURRICULUM IN LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION FOR JUNIOR HIGH HONORS STUDENTS

by George Hillocks, Jr.

Even though honors students read well, they still need systematic help in reading literature. The first honors unit in literature came into existence because teachers realized that even honors students completely missed the point of satirical works they had read. The unit on satire revealed that it was possible to teach ninth grade honors students to recognize and interpret satire. Its success suggested that it might also be possible to teach students to deal with other difficult aspects of literature.

The next step in planning the honors curriculum was to ask what other techniques and problems the students must understand in order to understand literature. Eventually the planners arrived at three basic areas which they felt were important in understanding literature: 1) special aspects of the denotative level of meaning, 2) techniques used to achieve second levels of meaning, and 3) form and genre.

1. Special problems at the denotative level of meaning. For the most part honors students read and understand plots, characters, and the relationships between characters well. They readily gain empathy with characters about whom they read if the book is primarily concerned with what happens, and they readily objectify emotional situations when the emotions are complicated or obscured by a wealth of ideas or details. But bright students do have difficulty with the interpretation of the ideas implicit in a work. They do have difficulty in analyzing the forces operating on a character when those forces are not physical or personal. Although they have knowledge of the grosser aspects of social strata through television and movies and general experience, they have not objectified class interaction, social position, and social mobility, and therefore fail to recognize or comprehend such aspects of works they might encounter. And finally they do not realize that the way a character acts in a given situation may be a statement of credo, of man's relationship to other men, of man's place in the universe.

All of these problems suggested that particular units could be devised to focus the students' attention upon particular ideas and processes which would be helpful in his present and future reading. Some units like those on Courage and Justice focus attention upon the idea or theme conveyed by the work. These units begin by examining the nature of courage and justice and proceed by examining the concepts of courage and justice implied in specific works. Thus the approach to a particular work begins with examining the denotative or plot level of the story, and the first abstractions are statements about what happens specifically and how specific characters react. At the next level of abstraction the student is encouraged to make statements about the courage or justice reflected in the actions of the characters and in the situations of the plot. Next he examines the implicit concepts of courage or justice underlying the plot, and finally he examines what the work has said about man in general in relationship to his world. This final stage of abstraction is the point where the reader begins to deal with theme.

Other units which involve the same process of abstraction from the plot level center in man's relationship to various aspects of his environment. At the seventh grade level one unit deals with man in relation to his physical environment, while at the eighth grade level one unit deals with man in relation to social organization and another with man in relation to cultural institutions. The unit dealing with social organization examines the effects of status, power, wealth, and mobility upon narrative figures as they move through the course of events described by the author. The unit dealing with the cultural environment examines the effects which the various cultural institutions have upon the narrative figure.

2. Techniques used to achieve second levels of meaning. Nearly all readers in junior and senior high school as well as many adult and college readers fail to recognize and interpret symbols in a literary work and may completely ignore all but the most obvious allegory. The problem with reading satire has already been mentioned. Therefore a series of units dealing with allegory and symbolism was introduced to the curriculum. The objectives of these units were several: to make

the student aware of techniques used by authors to convey meaning beyond the denotative level of a work, to make the student aware of the relationships existing among these techniques, and to enable the student to make interpretative statements about works whose meaning exists at more than one level.

The first unit in the curriculum dealing explicitly with levels of meaning is a very simple one in the seventh grade. This unit introduces the idea of symbols as they exist in fables and simple allegorical poems and in Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Masque of the Red Death." In all of these the symbols have clearly defined referents and the symbols have precise and clear relationships to one another. The student first objectifies what he already knows about conventional symbols and then enters upon a discussion of particular fables whose personae and situations are clearly symbolic. He deals with the problems of what the animals and situations represent. From fables he moves to simple poems which give many clues to the meaning of the symbols. With "The Masque of the Red Death" the clues are diminished and the student is confronted with a more difficult problem of interpretation.

In the eighth grade unit on allegory and symbolism the student develops a definition of allegory, works with interpreting material which presents fewer clues to meaning, and finally deals with works whose symbols have multiple meanings and are not directly related to one another. In other words the student shifts from the rigid, fairly simple symbol characteristic of medieval allegory to the flexible and complex symbol of modern writing. The student can no longer rely upon a single word or phrase to identify the referent of a symbol, and he frequently has difficulty making the transition. His tendency to oversimplify must be constantly confronted with the text. Gradually, then, he comes to recognize that many literary works contain symbols less rigid and less obvious than those of allegory and that the symbols of such works are frequently complex and subtle in their meanings.

In the ninth grade the student re-examines his earlier definition of allegory, tries to establish the relationships between literal, metaphoric, allegorical, and symbolic levels, and attempts to redefine allegory to include works which are not allegorical in the medieval sense but which nonetheless contain some of the characteristics of allegory. He examines the differences in quality and function between the symbols of Everyman and those of Steinbeck's The Pearl. He deals with works whose symbols are less highly clued and express complex emotions and ideas. Despite his sojourn into critical theory during his analysis of the various levels of meaning, the main emphasis of the unit is not on critical theory but on building the students' ability to interpret a work. If in the eighth grade the student had a tendency to use a single word or phrase to explain a symbol, and if he tended to create a private explanation or interpretation of a work, without regard to the text, by the end of the ninth grade unit he should be aware of both these shortcomings. His interpretations should be both more complete and more closely dependent upon close textual analysis of a work.

In addition to the series of units concerned with allegory and symbolism the eighth and ninth grade units on satire deal with levels of meaning in a somewhat more restricted sense. A college student once commented that 1984 was an immoral book because it recommended and set up as ideal the kind of society described by Orwell in the book. Certainly this student needed to learn something about levels of meaning. The satirist uses special techniques to convey his criticism which exist not at the level of denotation but at the level of the connotative values of the words and phrases which make up a work. The satirist says one thing and means another. He often implies his criticism. The student must learn to understand these implications.

3. Form and genre. The shape and/or form of a work contributes meaning to the work or controls the meaning of the work in special ways, so that the consideration of form in general and of forms in particular becomes a necessary part of the curriculum in literature. Form in general is that which any artist imposes upon experience during the process of composing--the selection and arrangement of events and ideas. The general form of a work may be tight and restricted, observing the classical unities of space, time, and action and concentrating on the events of a moment as they have arisen from the past and will project into the future; or the

general form may be loose and sprawling, presenting a panoramic view of man as he confronts the problems of his existence. Form in the particular sense refers to those generic forms which can be defined and differentiated on the basis of both structure and subject matter. Genre will be used to designate form in the particular sense in which tragedy, epic, comedy, formal verse satire, pastoral, and the epigram are forms.

Because a particular work may exhibit a form which other works do not possess, form in the general sense can be examined only in relation to specific works. It is possible, of course, to compare the effects of similar forms and to contrast the effects of differing forms. Form in the particular sense, in the sense of genre, concerns not only the shape of the work but the prototypes of the characters and the tone of the interaction of both shape and character. In classic formal verse satire, for instance, the main character appoints himself critic and pursues his course cursing and denouncing all the ills of his society. Even in his self-righteousness, however, his scurrilous condemnation of what he designates as evil as he moves from one social class to another and from one physical location to another, reflects something base in his own nature--something which finds a certain depraved pleasure in bringing to light and condemning vileness.

In similar ways the interaction of form with content in other genre provides much of the meaning of the work. In the honors program at the ninth grade level, materials have been prepared to increase the student's ability to analyze several works belonging to a particular genre: to synthesize the common characteristics of the works, to arrive at an understanding of the interaction of form and content in the genre and in particular works, and to apply this knowledge in the reading of additional works.

The first unit in the series examines the form and content of heroic myths and leads to the examination of epic, tragedy, comedy, and satire. The sequence from one unit to the next is strong and provides many opportunities for contrasts and comparisons of the relationships existing among both the content and form of the several genres. The three emphases of the curriculum--special problems at the denotative level, levels of meaning, and form--do not exclude other aspects of indivividual works from consideration, nor does it suggest that the great problems with which literature deals are ignored. On the contrary these three emphases tend to focus attention on the special ideas and problems raised by individual works. In the course of three years the student discusses the ideas of courage, justice, power, society, culture, fate, individualism, sin, guilt, repentance, the hero, and many others either as central to an entire unit or to a specific work.

The honors program in its present form exhibits not simply differences in degree from the average program but differences in kind. To begin with, the individual selections included in the program are more difficult than those in the average program. But more significant, the concepts taught are different. They demand that a student examine a text carefully and hold a great many factors in mind in order to draw inferences. From the seventh to the ninth grade, while analysis of the denotative level continues, there is an increasing emphasis on the role of such things as symbol, irony, form and genre. The student must evaluate a number of possible answers to the problems set up in a particular unit. He must entertain several answers simultaneously when he deals with a work which exists on more than one level. He must move freely between the concrete and abstract. Since the units are organized into a series of problems, he is constantly confronted with problem solving situations, many of which he must deal with individually. Each unit culminates in an individual reading assignment which demands that the student bring to bear not only the ideas of the present unit but those of units previously studied. These problems also require that the student pursue his analysis systematically and organize the resultant insights and ideas.

The writing assignments in the honors program are based upon more abstract topics and demand that the student deal with a larger number of ideas than in the average program. The creative writing assignments, while including some of those present in the average program, are generally adapted to the specific units in the honors program.

These differences exist because the honors student is able to abstract, to deal with a multiplicity of factors, to evaluate a series of possibilities, to organize ideas systematically, and to read difficult material. If the English program is to challenge the bright student, sharpen his mental abilities, and increase his sensitivity to literature, and therefore to life, it must cease to be content with a single answer to a plot level question, a question which neither the teacher nor the student can become excited about. It must give the student the background and skills to confront the problems which have concerned mankind so much that he has written about them. It must excite both the teacher and the student so that nothing need be taken for granted on the basis of tradition or authority and so that an atmosphere of real inquiry can be established not only in the classroom but in the minds of the students.

A REMEDIAL PROGRAM FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

by James F. McCampbell

The slow student has had many failures, and every failure is a threat. It says to the student, "You're no good." The student's way to avoid failure is to quit trying. Then he rationalizes, the reason for the teacher's criticism is not that he can't do the assignment, but simply that he doesn't want to. He thus avoids threats to his ego and at the same time asserts his independence of authority. As this pattern develops he becomes less attentive in class, learns less, becomes a behavior problem, and generally compounds the inadequacy of his work with a belligerent attitude.

English teachers have habits which are particularly likely to frustrate slow students. First, they fear activity which is not completely under their supervision. As a consequence, students are usually allowed a minimum amount of participation in classroom discussion. Teachers assume that because small student groups arrive at conclusions far more slowly, they are wasting time. This probably is not true. Teachers must recognize that, although students--particularly slow students--are inclined to get off the topic, usually this misdirection is a sign of frustration with the task at hand. If the teacher will carefully plan the use of small group work so that the students have been given the specific tools necessary to solve the particular problem presented; if he will structure the goal of the group so that it is clearly stated and within the range of the student's ability; and if he will recognize getting off the topic as a signal of the need for better structure in the situation rather than as a signal to end this opportunity for learning self-direction, then he will find that over the period of a year the students will exhibit tremendous growth in their ability to work in small groups with less teacher direction.

Second, the English teacher also tends to overtalk reading assignments. With a long and thorough educational background in literary analysis and interest in the abstract problems implied in literary works, he tends to deal with works at a level far removed from the students. Careful attention to what students have to say about a story, and careful attempts to move them just a bit from where they are will result in greater willingness on the part of the students to read. Curiously, these students need a great deal of reading material in the classroom. While gifted students see many ramifications in a signle work, the slower students may need many works to develop a single abstraction. As a consequence the teacher must have far more materials available.

Third, English teachers mark themes too conscientiously. We have all had strong reactions toward a paper of ours which was, in our opinion, overmarked. The slow student's reactions are even stronger. Already discouraged and ready to quit, he responds only to encouragement. Besides, he doesn't know what the marks mean or how to correct the errors which they indicate. For such a student, the comments should be limited to praise. Finally, these students will not do homework. Many write poorly in a well structured classroom situation where the teacher can provide direction and assistance. It is unreasonable to expect them to be able to work at home. Out of class assignments will simply lead to more failure and less interest.

The complexity of these problems can best be managed in a classroom situation structured to meet the specific problems of these slower students. In other words, they require a remedial program. Simple tasks done well in class and praised by the teacher can help the remedial student participate more willingly. Individual attention--to students seldom recognized except as behavior problems--will also encourage participation. The remedial teacher can create an atmosphere of support and success which is impossible for the regular classroom teacher. But the regular teacher also plays an important part in the remedial program.

All teachers realize that a remedial program attempts to provide for the specific problems of students who function inadequately in the normal classroom situation. Yet few of us recognize the tremendous importance of the regular classroom teacher in making a remedial program a success. Despite the full time efforts of

special teachers, the advice of consultants or supervisors, and the information of permanent records, the remedial students will not be identified without the help of the classroom teacher. Only he can spot the students who are having trouble daily. Without his recommendation of students, any remedial program will not fully accomplish its purpose.

All teachers must, then, be fully aware of the specific purposes of the remedial program, and must have the necessary tools to recognize students in the remedial program.

The remedial program at Euclid Central has criteria for students both entering and leaving the classes in reading and composition. New teachers are familiarized with these criteria and are given specific techniques for identifying these students. Because of this training and the excellent cooperation of the administration, students are identified early in the school year and moved immediately to remedial classes. Also, the administration is willing to move students out of the remedial program at any time during the year on the recommendation of the remedial teacher.

Identifying remedial reading students involves four major steps for the classroom teacher. First, he checks the permanent records for scores in I.Q. and reading. If a student's score on the California Reading Test is two years below grade level, or if there is a fifteen point discrepancy between the student's language and non-language factors on the California Test of Mental Maturity, the student may be a candidate for remedial reading. Second, he gives an informal diagnostic test in class which roughly estimates each student's reading speed, vocabulary skill, recognition of main ideas, and ability to make inferences. Students who are inadequate on this test may also become candidates. Third, he observes students during their free reading. Students who are outstandingly slow or who exhibit signs of frustration may also become candidates. Finally, he gives an oral inventory to provide a check on his previous observations, a closer check on word attack skills, and an indication of understanding through fluency and intonation pattern.

On the basis of this information, the teacher confers with the remedial teacher to determine which candidates will be placed in the remedial class. Because the major purpose of the remedial program is to bring students to the reading level that can be expected of them, some students, because they have reached this level, will be left in regular classes in spite of their low scores on the various measures. The criteria for determining a reasonable expectation for the student is the comparison of reading level and I.Q. score. A student with an I.Q. of 80 in the eighth grade can be expected to read at approximately fifth grade level. If he is at this level, then he is reading to expectation and is placed in a regular class. However, since group measures of I.Q. are primarily reading tests, they are a rather poor measure of I.Q. for poor readers. Consequently, in making judgments about placement, the student is always given the benefit of the doubt.

Students in the remedial reading program will vary in ability from second grade level to seventh grade level. Obviously they cannot be instructed as a whole class. Therefore, the first major goal of the remedial teacher is to train the students to be self-sufficient in some basic activities. After they are so trained, the teacher is free to establish special programs to meet the needs of individual students. Basic activities include the use of the SRA inference lab, the SRA readinb lab, the speed-i-o-scope, Reader's Digest Skill Builders, projected materials for far point reading, and taped materials for students to hear as they read. As soon as the students are skilled in the mechanics of these activities, they are divided into small groups and stationed at various points of the room. After becoming familiar with this classroom situation, the students are able to function independently with enough variation in activities to maintain their interest.

Now the teacher is free to diagnose individual problems more carefully and establish individualized programs on the basis of this diagnosis. Since many of the students have a long history of remedial training, they have already used many of the usual techniques of remediation and have found them wanting. Consequently, the remedial teacher must constantly search for new techniques which might prove effective. A discussion of the more imaginative techniques reads somewhat like a poster for a three-ring circus. A recent aritcle in Life magazine described a

program which claimed great success in improving reading by training students to crawl. Some have improved reading skill by having students trace a large sandpaper alphabet. Others have used balancing boards and trampolines to improve reading. The point is that severe retardation in reading is a complex, little understood problem for which there are no ready solutions. The teacher must be open to--indeed, constantly searching for--suggestions that may be helpful.

No matter what specific techniques the teacher uses, he will be dealing with the basic reading skills which are outlined and explained in many texts, periodicals and reading series. The following is an example of such a list.

I. Vocabulary skills.
  A. Basic sight vocabulary.
  B. Word attack.
    1. Word analysis and word structure.
      a. Phonics.
      b. Syllabification.
      c. Prefixes, roots and suffixes.
  C. Context.
    1. Sentence sense.
    2. Synonyms.
  D. Using the dictionary.

II. Comprehension skills.
  A. Following directions.
  B. Reading with purpose.
  C. Reading for main ideas.
  D. Reading for important details.
  E. Organizing ideas.
    1. Relational words.
    2. Noting relationships.
  F. Sensing cause and effect.
  G. Drawing conclusions and inferences.
  H. Study skills.
    1. The organization of texts.
      a. Table of contents.
      b. Index.
      c. Headings.
    2. Specialized subject area skills.
    3. The SQRRR study technique.

III. Rate skills.
  A. Flexibility.
  B. Avoiding regressions.
  C. Perceptual training.
    1. Page scansion.
    2. Phrase reading.

Considering both skill problems and classroom techniques, the teacher develops specific individualized programs. For example, a program for a severely retarded seventh grader might include practice with the Dolch list of basic sight vocabulary on flash cards, listening and following third grade level taped stories, working with second grade level Reader's Digest Skill Builders, reading SRA Elementary Reading Lab material projected for far point reading, study of vowel diphthongs and three consonant initial blends, alphabetizing papers for the teacher, practicing two and three letter words on the speed-i-o-scope, and participating in whole class sessions on prefixes. A ninth grader nearly ready to return to regular classes might have a program involving speed-i-o-scope training in phrase reading, practice with the SQRRR study method in his civic textbook, whole class sessions on prefixes, free reading of high interest materials available in the classroom, vocabulary development by listing synonyms culled from a dictionary, practice in the SRA inference lab, workbook materials on finding main ideas, and rehearsing for his part in taping a radio play.

In such a classroom situation the students have varied activities to maintain interest, a skills program planned specifically to meet their needs, and whole class instruction in common problems of reading. But to provide additional incentive, the classroom atmosphere should be carefully planned to involve the students in evaluating their own learning. They should have in their folders a chart of their weekly activities with room for their evaluation--in graphic or written form--of what they have accomplished. Such an organization is reinforced by the compliments and comments of the teacher in both whole class, small group, and individual discussion.

When the students have reached their expected level of achievement, they are scheduled into the remedial composition class before moving to a regular English class. In addition, the remedial composition class will include students who have been recommended by the regular classroom teacher. Although the criteria for selection are not as specific as those for remedial reading, they have the same basic function--to identify students whose composition skill is below the level that could be expected of the student. Weakness in specific skills--handwriting, spelling, sentence sense--may lead to their recommendation. Weakness in the more complex processes of composition--organizational ability, paragraphing, logic--may lead to their recommendation. Finally, general frustration with the task of writing--failure to turn in themes, inability to focus attention on composition tasks in class, or failure to produce more than three or four lines on any assignment--may lead to the student's being recommended for remedial composition. These weaknesses are measured against the quality of the student's overall performance as exhibited by language factor scores on I.Q. testing, previous English grades, reading ability, oral ability, and grades on tests. If there is a divergence between exhibited composition skill and expected skill, the student is placed in the remedial composition class.

Even though these same criteria are used to select all remedial composition students, they will still cover a wide range of abilities. In this divergence of abilities and in the pattern of frustration and defeat present in these students, the remedial composition class resembles the remedial reading class. For this reason it is organized in much the same way. Individualized programs of instruction are constructed for each student once his major problems have been diagnosed. Because of the poor self-discipline of the students, they are given maximum direction. The activities within the classroom are varied, and the time allotted to any one activity is limited by the students' short attention span. The work is concrete, because remedial students are neither interested in nor capable of handling high level abstractions.

Spelling is one good subject for these students, even though research shows that systematic spelling drill with lists has little carry-over to writing situations. It is valuable because it is concrete, kinesthetic, easy, directed, and short. It also sets a pattern--a comfortable thing for these students--and gives the students an opportunity to succeed. This activity is not suggested to teach spelling--research suggests that it will not accomplish this end. It is suggested because daily spelling work begins the class in an orderly fashion, frees the teacher to work with individuals, gives recognition to the best students, and gives everyone a chance to succeed. Excellent lists of words at the students' level can be culled from elementary spelling books and from the students' themes.

Work with sentence patterns can be organized in the same fashion as a short activity to end the period. This structured concrete program at the beginning and end of the period provides a frame of easy work and successful experience which help create a supportive environment. Within the environment the teacher's first job is to diagnose student abilities and weaknesses. Such diagnosis should cover the areas of idea, organization, syntax, and mechanics. As with remedial reading, the diagnosis should begin at the level at which all students can achieve success and gradually move to more difficult problems.

What types of problems can we find with which the students can deal successfully? The following relatively superficial analysis of writing tasks suggests a possible sequence of difficulty.

1. Writing a summary of a short story is a very easy assignment. The ideas are directly available and already organized. Nearly every student can successfully write about such a topic.
2. Next in difficulty comes the personal narrative. Students will have little difficulty in recalling events, and they are still chronologically organized. The greatest difficulty of this assignment will be assisting the students in filling in the necessary description to round out the writing.
3. Pure description calls for more acute observation and/or imagination than these students are used to using. But these are available to the students if they can be taught to observe. Also, the organizational pattern is not prescribed but must be developed.
4. Exposition of a process or an abstraction is even more difficult because the ideas as well as the organization must be developed by the student.
5. Perhaps argumentation is the most difficult writing process because the student must develop ideas, organize them, and foresee the opposing arguments which he must answer in his writing.

This pattern of difficulty has no foundation in psychology or learning theory. It is the result of observation and trial in the classroom. It would be presumptuous to assume that this pattern will apply to all students. Some are extremely adept at argumentation, while others find exposition to be their forte. But no matter what individual pattern the teacher diagnoses, this hypothesis can be a place to start.

Should a student be unable to write a summary of an easy short story, he needs immediate attention. If he is unable to follow the chronological sequence, or unable to recognize main ideas and important details, he needs to develop these fundamental skills in a remedial reading class. He should be accepted in a remedial composition class only after he attains these skills. Students who can successfully write a short story summary will furnish the teacher with a basis for diagnosing difficulties in syntax and mechanics.

Marking themes for this purpose is a relatively simple process. Underlining spelling errors, and the usual English teacher shorthand in the margin, is adequate. The important emphasis is the use of these marks after they have been made. The specific skills should be remedied only one at a time and only after a sufficient body of writing has been collected to assure that the error is a major problem for the student. Instruction in small groups or with individuals is probably the best approach because these students are seldom able to concentrate on an abstraction presented to the whole class. They are much more likely to respond to individual attention.

It is often possible to let students help each other. When one student has conquered a particular skill, asking him to help others will be a tremendous boost to his ego. Also, such an arrangement again helps free the teacher and allows students to develop their ability to work with less teacher direction.

Organizational ability can be diagnosed from the students' ability to work with description, exposition, and argumentation. Each assignment provides its own difficulties and suggests various patterns for the student to learn.

But the diagnosis of problems is only the first step. The major problem is, of course, how to overcome these difficulties, that is, how to teach. The most important principle of instruction for the remedial composition teacher is to develop writing skills in concrete situations rather than to attempt to teach rules. The practice in the use of any skill should, for the remedial student, be patterned to help him move from a mimetic performance to an independent performance.

The most obvious mimicry is that of copying exactly. This is the point at which any technique should be introduced. Next, sections of the pattern should be alternately withdrawn so that the student develops his ability to mimic without the entire pattern present. The process should continue until the student can apply the pattern without the aid of a model. Finally, the student should apply the pattern to a new situation independently. If he can do this, he shows successful internalization of a behavior pattern.

For example, in a study of courage (adapted from a seventh grade average unit) the students were to define courage. The teaching began with the presentation of several definitions of objects. (A hammer is a tool used for pounding and pulling nails.) After reading these definitions, the class analyzed their characteristics--identification of a class and distinction from other members of the class; then they copied from dictation several other definitions of the same form. Next they were given a worksheet, half of which provided the distinction from other members of the class while the other half provided only the class. Some of these definitions were more abstract qualities such as honesty. Finally they were asked to write definitions independently, and then they were asked to collect definitions of courage from at least five people. The next day, while they were reading an essay about courage, the teacher discussed each student's worksheet errors with him individually. When the reading was completed, the class discussed the definitions they had collected. As they evaluated them, they copied the best ones. They then analyzed the essay for its definition of courage, and finally small groups wrote their own definitions of courage. They had thus been given a background in both definition form and the concept of courage before they were asked to define courage. Later in the unit, they wrote definitions independently.

In the same unit, the students were asked to write a personal narrative about their need for courage. To prepare for this writing assignment, the class first objectified a pattern that was apparent in the reading they had done: the general scene, specific scene, the need for courage, the show of courage, the result, and a conclusion. After the class had abstracted this pattern, there were four steps to writing an individual composition. First they read and discussed a teacher-written theme about courage. Second, they suggested possible theme topics, selected one at random, and dictated it as the teacher used an overhead projector in writing it. Third, the students wrote another theme of the same type in small groups. Finally, they wrote individual themes. Again, in this more complex area of composition organization, the movement from specific model to independent writing helped them achieve success.

The teacher who has taken the time and effort to develop a program for these students will find in the process of trial and error those methods and materials which succeed and those which do not. He will find the classroom techniques becoming more and more successful and the teaching situation less and less frustrating. As he sees more accurately the problems of the students and the methods most successful in overcoming those problems he will find himself less interested in the grade and more eager to spend his time in satisfying the needs of his students.

SOME APPROACHES TO COMPOSITION
by James F. McCampbell

What is necessary to get a student to write well? The most obvious answer is that he must have ideas to write about. Very well then, how can we help him develop ideas? Certainly we cannot equip him with ideas the way we might equip him with gym shoes. Ideas are something very different; they are internal. What can we do to get the cogs turning? What can we do to stimulate that ill-defined process we call thinking?

One technique that the Euclid Central curriculum uses to motivate thinking is stimulation through literature. For example, "Born of Man and Woman," a short story by Richard Matheson, is the introduction to the unit on The Outcast. This story of a "thing" oozing green fluid and chained to the basement wall by its parents, provokes innumerable questions from the students. It begins the thinking process; it starts students asking questions. But answers are the ends of questions, and the end of questions is the end of learning. The teacher's task is not to complete the inquiry with answers, but rather to extend it with additional questions. He must allow tentative statements of solution as well as maintain the openendedness that additional questions provide. Thus the unit process becomes a kind of rhythmic flow of increasing intensity and depth as the students move from question to answer to question to answer....Another technique which proves successful in starting thought is the direct presentation of a problem--for example, what is justice? The students follow the same rhythmic pattern, this time moving from a tentative answer to literature which proves the definition inadequate, and hence leads to additional questions and redefinition. These processes--making use of short stories, poetry, essays, and novels to provide additional questions and to suggest tentative answers--seem successful in developing the student's ideas.

We know the importance of relating writing assignments to the experience of the writer. Literary units are inherently more sound in this respect than the usual theme assignment that seeks to take advantage of the student's personal experience.

"Good morning, boys and girls! Well, here we are in our third day of school. We know our seats, we've received our books, we've read the first story. Now before we begin our discussion of the story, I would like to get a sample of our writing ability. Everyone take out his notebook and write a theme for me about one of these two topics: 'What I Did Last Summer' or 'Looking Back At My Life.'" I've given that assignment--or one very much like it--and I suspect you have, too. Why? Because we really did want that writing sample; we wanted it to find out what problems our students had so we might begin helping them to improve. And we wanted to give them a topic that they could manage--something that would be easy to write about.

The inherent difference between such "personal experience" assignments and assignments growing from the literary unit is that the personal experience assignment has no structure. How long would you have to analyze yourself and your world to discover the patterns that have grown or been discarded in the last eight months? What could you say about that period? Have its threads formed strands to form a rope that you can grasp and call your life? Does it have a warp and woof, a design, an end and a beginning? The personal experiences of our lives are so intimate a part of our totality that we can structure them only through the objectivity of time.

But the problems of the literary unit, on the other hand, lend themselves to structure because they are specifically goal-directed. As they give direction and purpose to inquiry, so do they give direction and purpose to writing. The student knows what he is about. He knows what to say and why he is saying it. The unit provides the structure inherent in a problem solving approach to learning.

This is not to say that the student's thinking process has followed the unit structure in sequential predictable steps. On the contrary, it would seem that the structure of the thinking and learning process is very different from the structure of a finished composition. Consider your own process of thought development in reading, in conversation, or in writing. It wanders, jumps, doubles back, illogical and incomplete. Yet we expect the composition to be logical and unidirectional. The thought process is like a vine--organic, growing in many directions, attaching to many objects; the composition is like an arrow or a circle--directional and closed. The student knows this at least subconsciously. He gives evidence of his knowledge in the scrawled drawing that fills the last page of his theme in a slightly rococo style--THE END. Yet his theme will not have the finished structure that the words imply unless the student has a purpose and direction to tie his thoughts to. The problem solving approach can serve this function. It gives direction and purpose; it demands the objectification and precision of statement that are necessary to composition.

Nor do I wish to imply that writing about personal experiences is impractical. Such assignments are invaluable to literary units because they illuminate the relationship between literary study and the student's life. But such an illumination is possible only if the assignment is carefully selected and structured for the student. In nearly every unit our curriculum creates an opportunity for students to look at their lives in terms of the unit concepts. But notice the difference. Whereas the typical "personal experience" theme asks the student to find a significant pattern in the welter of his experiences, our units give him a conceptual tool which he can apply to better understand his experience. When the students have gained some insight into the unit problems, a discussion leads them to see their own lives in these terms. "Have you ever been treated unjustly? By whom? When? What did he do that was unfair? How did it turn out?" Very quickly the class has provided the skeletal structure for a personal experience theme.

But of course they aren't ready to write their themes yet. The teacher must provide enough practice with this kind of assignment so that the students can function with confidence. Our units provide this experience by the use of group techniques and model compositions. As students suggest appropriate answers to the questions, the teacher takes notes on the board, organizing the student comments into a logical pattern. Then he directs additional questions to the class to assist them in formulating the paragraph structure of the theme. Finally he leads the class in writing the sentences which fill out the skeletal form which the class has developed. With this model in mind, the students are divided into small groups to organize a second outline following the pattern they have developed. This small group situation offers ideational and organizational support from peers, greater opportunity to verbalize, greater independence, and practice in using the model. It frees the teacher from whole class responsibility and allows him to work more closely with those students who need the most guidance. The final step is the individual theme. Because they are familiar with the pattern and have had the opportunity to verbalize their ideas, they are far better prepared to write a good theme.

The unit approach to literature also provides a sound basis for the research paper. Again, the problem solving basis of the unit makes the use of library skills purposeful. But more important, the paper itself has value. No longer an empty exercise in form, it becomes a valuable addition to class discussion of the unit concepts. However, the basic difficulty with the research paper is that we often find ourselves grading the Encyclopedia Britannica (and that's particularly embarrassing if you happen to give it less than an A). Of course the student learns much in the process. He learns many facts and ideas from his intimate association with the material. But because we feel that the process of inductive investigation will in the long run be more valuable than the learning in a research paper, and because we feel that compositions are better when they are the explication of concepts which have been carefully and fully developed under the teacher's direction, our units are limited in their use of research. We are more interested in thoughts about books than thoughts from books.

Literature also serves as a model for teaching creative writing. The patterns of narrative; the development of specificity in setting, characterization, and action; and the emergence of style are all characteristics of good short stories which the students can abstract and use as patterns for their own writing. The varying abilities of the students will dictate the specificity of the model that must be used, but all students can gain from the imitation of professional writing. To reiterate, the achievement comes not from the exhortation "Imitate!" but rather from the inductive analysis of an author's pattern and purpose--the involvement of the student in the process of creation.

The process is important--not the works read, nor the answers formulated, but the process of investigating experience, both read and vicarious. When a student has read Macbeth carefully, with the teacher's direction; when a student has written his research paper on the Elizabethan theater or the uses of the supernatural in Shakespeare's tragedies; when the student has done his character study of Lady Macbeth; how do we measure what he has learned? We give him a test on Macbeth. We measure his ability to reproduce with sophistication the ideas of others--his teacher or the scholars. But we do not measure his ability to apply this knowledge to other situations. On the other hand, the literary units of our curriculum attempt to focus not on facts, research, and teacher lectures, but rather on the concepts which are applicable in other situations. What does this have to do with composition? It suggests that the final test of a student's learning is not in his ability to deal with a work previously well analyzed, but rather in his ability to use concepts in understanding works of literature fresh to him. The literature unit offers this further advantage in teaching composition. It measures the student's ability to see relationships and to apply ideas in new situations. In other words it measures his ability to structure and organize his experience--his ability to compose.

Now that's all very well, but you will have noticed by now that this article has not dealt with the specific skills of composition. How can literature aid us in approaching the problems of incomplete sentences, atrocious spelling, subject-verb agreement, etc., etc., etc.? Perhaps there is no way to avoid the drudgery of inventories and analysis of mechanical errors, but the integration of the literary unit and composition does offer one value. If we have learned to deal with small groups in the study of literature, we can apply the same structure to the improvement of composition skills. As soon as we have broken the barrier of whole class instruction, we can work with composition problems as they are evident, rather than giving broadside lessons on sentence structure or unity to students who are either beyond our discussion or not yet ready to learn. The idea of treating composition problems as they arise for individuals, small groups, or large groups is not, of course, an approach inherent in the integration of literature and composition. But it is an approach inherent in our units which attempt to use group structures to adapt to the needs of the students. In this approach, composition skills are taught as they are needed rather than being forced into a sequence which is neither logical nor efficient.

The literary unit, then, has the following advantages as a basis for composition. It provides conceptual tools for interpreting literature and experience. It provides a problem solving goal which in turn provides a structure for composition. It gradually decreases the teacher's role so that the student can become more independent in his thinking and composition. It provides professional models for both expository and creative writing assignments. It provides time in the classroom for individual conferences. It deals with the topics most central to the English curriculum.

Finally, and perhaps most important, it provides a process. Because the unit does not seek to teach specific works, because it does not seek to teach specific answers, there is hope that it may teach a process of inquiry--formulation, tentative application, and further inquiry--which will help the student become a thinking growing free individual.

SEMANTICS AND THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

by Betty Lou Miller

To begin a discussion of general semantics as a part of the junior high school curriculum, it is important to establish a fundamental knowledge of some of the basic principles common to all theories of meaning. Since entire books have been written on this topic, it is obvious that the explanation here presented will be necessarily brief. A short selected bibliography which suggests further reading in the area is provided at the end of this article.

One of the essential distinctions established by semanticists is deceiving in its apparent simplicity: The word is not the thing. In other words, the symbol, verbal or written representative, is not the referent, actual object or idea. Of course, no one confuses these two levels. Or do they? How many times have people struggled for "suitable" words in conversation when the obvious, or most direct term is readily known to both the speaker and the listener? In the areas of politics, religion, sex, medicine, and death, people hesitate to use certain terms, as if pronouncing the words "dying" or "tuberculosis" somehow threatens the occurrence of the things which these terms describe. How often does the phrase, "I'd rather not talk about that," occur in everyday conversation: This tendency to confuse the name with the thing it describes is even more pronounced in primitive cultures where where certain words have strict taboos. Examples of this taboo on words are recorded by James Frazer in The Golden Bough:

> Taboos are applied not only to acts and objects but also to words, and to none more than to names. Primitive man regards his name as a vital portion of himself, and guards it accordingly. For this reason many savages at the present day take great pains to conceal their real names, lest these should give to evil-minded persons a handle by which to injure their owners.
>
> (p. 187, The New Golden Bough)

> Further, when the name of the deceased happens to be that of some common object, such as an animal, or plant, or fire, or water, it is sometimes considered necessary to drop that word in ordinary speech and replace it by another.
>
> (p. 192, The New Golden Bough)

> When the name is held to be a vital part of the person, it is natural to suppose that the mightier the person the more potent must be his name. Hence the names of supernatural things, such as gods and spirits, are commonly believed to be endowed with marvelous virtues, and the mere utterance of them may work wonders and disturb the course of nature.
>
> (p. 193, The New Golden Bough)

Whether on the superstitious level of the primitive, or on the more sophisticated level of modern day "social etiquette," the confusion of the word with the thing is a reality which semanticists recognize and analyze.

A second point in the semanticist's theory is the distinction between the verbal and the non-verbal world. The non-verbal world consists of that which is perceived by the five senses (the macroscopic world); that which is perceived by the use of instruments constructed to extend man's sense perceptions, such as the microscope and the electrocardiogram (the microscopic world); and that which cannot be perceived directly but which is inferred by indirection, such as the atom or the process of evaporation (the sub-microscopic world). Beyond the non-verbal world lies the verbal world, the world of language. This consists of all the oral and written symbols used by man to communicate sensations from the non-verbal

world, and inferences made from such sensations. It is the world of words and signs.

Through a system of arrangement by levels, generally shown as a vertical graph, semanticists illustrate the hierarchical order between and within the verbal and non-verbal worlds. Each step on the ladder is less detailed about the actual referent than the one below it. This is best illustrated by comparing three of the levels: the microscopic, macroscopic, and the label. Man's observations of a piece of wood without the aid of measuring or magnifying devices enable him to make certain judgments about the size, weight, texture, and color of the wood. Here he is operating on a macroscopic level. But his macroscopic observations are far more simple and incomplete than the knowledge of the wood which he attains on the microscopic level through his use of the ruler, the scale, and the microscope. Even at this he has not exhausted the details contained in a single piece of wood. Further, the moment he labels the wood as wood, he has taken a great leap up the ladder of abstraction. In fact, the step from the non-verbal level to the verbal level is the greatest leap in the process of abstraction.

Abstraction itself can most simply be defined as a movement, accompanied by a necessary omission of details, from the concrete, non-verbal world to the increasingly abstract verbal world. Wendell Johnson, in his book <u>People in Quandaries</u>, expresses the levels of abstraction in this manner:

Etc.

Inference
3

Inference
2

Inference — Verbal world
1

Label or description

Macroscopic

Microscopic — Non-verbal world

Submicroscopic

The higher levels, here named inferences, are descriptions of "the unobservable aspects of reality," as Wendell Johnson states in <u>People in Quandaries</u>. Inferences are man's evaluation, interpretation, and organization of the real world, and separate him from the lower animals, which operate primarily on a macroscopic level. The "Etc." represents the openendedness of the process of abstraction, expressing a semanticist's belief in man's ability to continue this process infinitely.

In addition to expressing the relationship of words to reality, the semanticist is concerned with the connection between the word and the speaker. He sees language as inextricably linked with the man who uses it. Language is subjective, no matter how precise, because it is the product of an individual who perceives the world through his unique nervous system, and then projects this perception back into the very reality to which he is reacting. Two simple examples will serve to illustrate this phenomena. Ask several people to identify a color, say blue-green, or a temperature, say lukewarm. They will differ. Similarly, consider the simple statement, "Clyde is a liar." It reveals not simply the qualities of Clyde, as the grammatical structure implies, but also something of the speaker--

his evaluation of the situation. It is an inference based on the speaker's perception of Clyde's actions. The degree of subjectivity is reduced by substituting the statement, "Clyde lied to me yesterday," and further reduced by the statement, "Clyde said he was going to the movies, but he went to the theater." In each case, as the statement becomes more explicit and the speaker's opinion becomes less predominant, the degree of abstraction is lessened and the statement is placed lower on the ladder, closer to the label or descriptive level. Yet even in the last example the speaker is involved in the statement. His perception of Clyde's intent and his identification of Clyde's destination both combine to form his verbal expression.

Language not only reflects the speaker, but also affects the listener or reader. This affective nature of language is also within the province of general semantics. Why do people react to words in predictable ways? How can language, carefully controlled, produce desired action on the part of the listener or reader? These are the types of questions the semanticist asks. The semanticist studies these word connotations--the feelings and emotions which people associate with words. The techniques of propaganda make use of this connotative analysis and apply the psychological mechanisms of language to produce a desired reaction or attitude.

The introduction of connotation and propaganda into this discussion brings it to the level of semantics in the classroom. Semantics as a part of the junior high school curriculum is a means of stimulating interest in language as an aid, and sometimes a detriment, to clear thinking, writing, and reading. It gives students greater control over both oral and written language. Knowledge of fundamental semantics, naturally simplified and abbreviated for the young mind, creates a sensitivity to and an awareness of words and their multiordinal meanings.

The semantics program structured for three grade levels at Euclid Central Junior High School is a consecutive program constructed so that each subsequent year builds on and expands the area of study from the previous years. Even with this inter-relatedness it is possible to use one or two of the units alone by adding extra material to illustrate the contingent concepts which the student must know to understand the work. The units taught include an introduction to semantic principles, a study of euphemism, an analysis of propaganda techniques, and an introduction to logic and argumentation. An introduction to basic semantic principles early in the study prepares the student for analysis of euphemisms, and for the application of general semantics in advertising propaganda, logic, and argumentation. The entire semantics program, in turn, provides him with a tool for analyzing literary techniques and the effectiveness and clarity of his own writing. A knowledge of the structure and function of general and specific statements helps the student to write better paragraphs and full length compositions. Understanding the connotative power of words is a valuable aid to the interpretation of poetry, a type of literature which relies heavily on connotation to convey meaning. Recognition of propaganda techniques provides a basis for evaluating an author's purpose in fiction and essay. These examples provide some insight into the way semantics is useful throughout the curriculum, in addition to being a valuable study for its own sake.

In the introduction to general semantics in the seventh grade, the students identify the following: symbol and referent and the relationship between the two, the process of abstracting and the relationship of the levels of abstraction to each other, the difference between the connotative and denotative meaning of words and the distinction between statements of report, false report, and judgment. This work is culminated by the analysis of each of these items as used in modern advertising.

The relationship between symbol and referent is described as an arbitrary assignment, discovered by the students through their answers to such questions as, "Why do we call a pig, pig? Why do we call the sun, sun? Why don't we call the sun, pig?" These questions lead into a discussion of language as a system of symbols assigned to objects and concepts, and used to communicate with other human beings. Language is seen as a means to communicate without the limitations of

spatial or temporal proximity to the objects or concepts being discussed. Of course, the students' statements about this phenomena are much more simply worded, but in essence they are the same.

The levels of abstraction serve to illustrate to the student the many symbols possible for the same referent, and the process of abstraction which the human mind goes through when it groups and classifies non-verbal referents. The ladder which the students construct in class is a simplification of the semanticist's ladder presented earlier, and avoids the use of difficult vocabulary. Although the students deal with the concept rather than the terminology, they build ladders beginning with the macroscopic non-verbal level and ending with a general, highly abstract level. This abstract level if developed further would produce the inferences suggested by Johnson's diagram. A student ladder looks something like this:

man-made object
household goods
furniture
chair
wooden chair

Or if the ladder builds in a different direction:

school equipment
classroom materials
classroom furniture
chair
wooden chair

In either case the students begin with an object which they perceive on a non-verbal level, in this case a desk chair, and label it as specifically as they choose. From here they proceed to suggest other terms for the same object and arrange these names in a hierarchical ladder building from specific to general. Through construction of this diagram and the discussions which ensue, the students are brought to realize that each step up the ladder involves an omission of details, and a growth in the number of referents classified under the term stated. Proceeding in a slightly different direction the discussion of connotation and denotation leads into the study of report and judgment.

When the students approach the study of euphemism they begin by reviewing the previous work on general semantics. Connotation and denotation form a basis for the identification and description of euphemism. The use of euphemism is studied as a human tendency to substitute "better sounding" or "polite" terms sanctioned by society for the description of objects or concepts which cause anxiety. Expressions for dying such as "passed away," "went to the happy hunting ground," "Gone to a happier life," "Kicked the bucket," and "expired," serve as the introductory examples of euphemism. Further examples of euphemistic and non-euphemistic language, and possible reasons for the growth of such language, are drawn from the class during this study.

Moving to the application of semantic principles in propaganda, the students concentrate further on the affective nature of language by focusing on the conscious manipulation of people through propaganda techniques. The students identify through example and discussion the techniques generally labeled as glittering generality, name-calling, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, bandwagon, and card-stacking. Excerpts from essays, samples of speeches, and films provide materials for the study of propaganda. In addition, the students are called upon to create their own written and oral materials which make use of propaganda techniques and reveal their understanding of how and when these techniques may be effective.

Culminating the study of semantics at Euclid Central is a unit on logic and argumentation. This unit synthesizes the work of past semesters and widens the scope of language control possible by the students. The study of logic begins with a more precise and sophisticated definition of generalization. Through the

introduction of the basics of inductive and deductive logic the students see the mechanism by which generalizations are formed and validated. They also study assumptions as untested generalizations and subject them to proof. In the process the students are called upon to test their own generalizations, subject their own assumptions to proof, and challenge the assumptions and generalizations of others. This activity naturally leads into the analysis of argumentative essays. Not only are the essays analyzed to reveal their formal structure, but also they are scrutinized for their use of propaganda techniques, connotation, judgment and report and, of course, generalization. The logic of each argument is discussed, and logical errors are criticized. To prepare the students for the criticism of logical errors, class time is spent in recognizing and describing traditionally defined logical errors. The emphasis is not placed on the standard names for such errors, but rather on recognition of their nature. Finally, the students are asked to write their own argumentative essays as a means of evaluating their ability to use language with a consciousness of its relation to reality, its factual and inferential nature, and its power to persuade.

Thus is the junior high school student introduced into the realm of words as complex symbols which at times trap man in a maze of verbal confusion and then again, release him from the physical limitations of time and space; which enable him to order his environment, but at the same time hinder his adjustment to a reality which changes faster than the language which describes it. The student has seen language in such a way that he will never completely relapse into a totally unconscious use of words, with disregard for their multiple meanings, suggestions, and powers.

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THE LANGUAGE PROGRAM

To speak of a language program as part of an English curriculum is misleading. In one sense it is the center, if not the whole, of an English curriculum. The essential task of the English teacher is to help a student understand and use his language efficiently, whether it be literary or colloquial. The study of literature is similar to the study of syntax in that both are involved with the structure of language. To be concerned with semantics, symbolism, and satire is to be concerned with the ways in which language conveys meaning. The teacher of English must help the student understand the syntactic and semantic functions of words as they appear in increasingly complex structures, but he must also help the student learn to create his own increasingly complex, purposeful structures. From this point of view, the language program is the English curriculum as a whole. Bearing this in mind, we can turn to specific problems of those areas which have been designated "language" areas of the curriculum: Morphology, syntax, and language change (synchronic and diachronic).

Professor Harold B. Allen of the University of Minnesota has conveniently classified grammars into types A-D. Allen's grammar A is the eighteenth century Latinate grammar with which we are all too familiar. Grammar B consists of the grammatical analyses of the grammarians such as Jespersen, Sweet, Curme, Poutsma, and Kruisinga. Grammar C is that development of descriptive linguistics called structural linguistics, and Grammar D is the transformational grammar of Noam Chomsky.

But there are still others. Charles Hockett of Cornell University calls his work constructional grammar; Sydney Lamb of Berkeley is working with stratificational grammar; David Hays of the Rand Corporation is developing dependency grammar. Rather frightening, isn't it?

This state of ferment in linguistic study faces us squarely with the problem of modern education which Dr. Squire so succinctly illuminated in his talk at the Demonstration Center conference on "A Curriculum for Average Students."

> Buffeted by the changes wrought by technology and by the increasing complexity of our times, our educational system now faces what Margaret Mead has called a need for teaching students "how to formulate unknown solutions for unknown problems." Our culture is changing so rapidly that it is not remotely possible to educate individuals with all of the specific skills and specific techniques which they will need to cope with tomorrow's problems---- If in effect then we are now educating in our classrooms the leaders of 20 or 25 years hence--the scientists, and statesmen and the artists of the year 2000--how must they best be prepared?

As teachers we clutch as our straws of knowledge because we fear the ocean of inadequacies which threatens to drown us. We do not understand how our language works; Noam Chomsky, C. C. Fries, and W. Nelson Francis do not understand how our language works (and would probably be the first to admit the fact). How are our students going to understand how our language works?

Perhaps attitudes are the most important results we can expect from introducing students to language study. The attitude that language is the humanistic study--the major force that gives man the powers that he has. The attitude that language both characterizes the individual using it and gives him the power to change his role. The attitude that language study is fascinating. The attitude that language can be judged only by its appropriateness to the situation in which it is used. If we can approach language study honestly and inquiringly perhaps our students will learn to follow suit.

The purpose of the language study units of the Euclid Central Junior High School curriculum is to introduce students to the study of language through inductive teaching techniques which demand that the student investigate the actualities of language usage rather than drilling on rules which are inaccurate and

ineffectual. These units include units on Morphology (seventh grade), Dialects (eighth grade), Syntax (eighth grade), and Change in Language (ninth grade).

MORPHOLOGY

The unit on morphology offers the student an opportunity to examine the way his language works in terms of the words which make it up. The student examines, at first, carefully selected samples of the language and formulates hypotheses, about the words and the way they function in context. The first language sample, for instance, might utilize only plural nouns in subject positions, comparative adjectives between determiners and nouns, and regular verbs in the past tense, e.g., "The larger elephants jumped. The smaller elephants walked." Thus the student can classify words on the basis of the characteristics revealed in the first language sample. He then sets up hypotheses about these three classes of words, e.g., the words ending in s precede the words ending in ed and follow the words ending in er. Such hypotheses are obviously inadequate, but this inadequacy is for the student to determine as he examines additional samples of the language. Each sample of course must introduce some new characteristics of the language which forces the student to revise his hypotheses to include these characteristics.

This process continues until the student has a set of adequate hypotheses (not rules) describing his language and until the student can use these hypotheses in the analyses of various language structures. It is important that the hypotheses remain at the level of hypotheses. They should not be allowed to become axioms. Once they have attained the status of axioms, investigation of the language ceases. In a culture changing as fast as ours, people must be willing to observe, hypothesize, and revise continually in the area of language as well as in other areas. Perhaps the chief value of this unit lies in teaching this process of examination, hypothesis, testing, and revision. It is such a process that allows one to maintain a valid view of a changing world. In addition the student will learn objective criteria for classification of the words in his language and will begin to see how these classes of words function with one another.

DIALECTS

The study of dialects seems to be an appropriate tool for the honest analysis of linguistic reality, and Andy Griffith's "What it was, it was football..." is an excellent introduction to dialects. One will find that students have a great store of intuitive knowledge about language differences. With very little direction from the teacher they will be able to distinguish the three major aspects of language variation--vocabulary, pronunciation, and syntax. Throughout these introductory investigations there will be opportunity to deal with student attitudes about language. At some point words such as "accent," "incorrect," "hillbilly," and "wrong" will arise in student attempts to explain Griffith's language patterns. They can be led to substitute the word "different" and a careful explanation of the difference for these pejorative judgments. The degree of sophistication to which these investigations are carried depends primarily upon the response of the class. Should the entire group find a particular field of investigation stimulating and exciting, they should continue their investigation. A small group of students can be allowed to pursue any particular problem in which they are interested. With any group, however, the introductory study of dialects will deal with the concepts of phonetic analysis, dialect geography, social dialects, and dialect in literature.

From attempts at phonetic transcription, the students should recognize that the written language does not directly represent the sounds of spoken English. Interested students might wish to attempt the development of an alphabet in which each letter would represent one and only one sound. H. L. Smith's movie on dialect will furnish the students with devices to use in analyzing a person's language geographically. With this brief background, they can prepare a questionnaire to use in isolating the geographic origin of some of the more unique speakers in the school or from the surrounding community. The presentation of a map from Kurath's A Word Geography of the Eastern United States and a testing of their own speech patterns in relation to some of the major distinctions between dialect areas could conclude this introduction by dialect geography. Again, interested students could

pursue the topic further, by studying isoglosses or analyzing more speakers. The introduction of jargon, slang, and levels of usage should make students aware that they react to language usage just as they react to the clothes and manners that people exhibit. The unit also deals with the use of dialects in literature. In fact the unit might just as easily have started from this point, since it is a field of great fascination for the students. The classic example is G. B. Shaw's "Pygmalion," which shows the use of language instruction to change the social standing of an individual. The bibliography from Dialects USA by Jean Malmstrom and Annabel Ashley, available from the NCTE for $1.00, is an excellent source for basic concepts and student activities. Any of the works in the bibliography may be used for analysis or oral presentation to extend the students' understanding of and feeling for dialect differences in language.

Finally, the unit attempts to synthesize the learning that has taken place through a final composition which should present not only distinctions made and conclusions drawn, but also problems which the writer feels have not yet been adequately investigated. The teacher may judge the success of the unit by the final compositions of the students. These compositions should reflect student knowledge and student attitudes. They should represent a knowledge of the wide varieties of pronunciation, vocabulary, and syntax that are used by educated speakers of English, and a willingness to accept these differences for what they are--not right or wrong, just different.

CHANGE IN LANGUAGE

A unit on language change is a valuable addition to an English curriculum if students are to be made aware of the basic findings of linguists and if they are to develop a realistic attitude about language. A unit of this kind must contain the ideas that any given language is constantly changing, that there are a great variety of languages, and that all languages have a structure that can be analyzed and described. Although there may be other principles about language that may be useful, it seems wise to restrict the study of language in junior high school to basic ideas about language rather than becoming involved in a too technical and complicated approach.

Most students entering junior high school have been exposed to some principles of language, but the exposure has often been limited to the study of traditional school grammar. They have not learned that their language is a changing--almost living--entity. They have been taught the dos and don'ts of traditional grammar and have as a result the attitude that the study of language is prescriptive. They usually are lost in the maze of terms and the intricacies of grammar. They have not found that the study of their language can be enjoyable and they cannot see how they are in any way involved.

The purpose of the unit on language change at Euclid Central Junior High School are to involve the students, to provide them with a realistic attitude toward language, and, perhaps, to demonstrate to them that the study of language is both fascinating and enjoyable. To accomplish these purposes the unit is structured to insure as much student participation as possible.

Students begin their study with changes in the words of our language that have been introduced into the language through intentional innovations, the influence of historical events, word borrowing, and semantic change. They study the use of words like "Sputnik" and "Beatlemania" and try to determine when the words were introduced, whether the words are used as a base for new words, and whether or not the use of the words has been discontinued and why. Later they study the introduction of words in given periods of history. The students also study different kinds of lapses that occur in their language and the changing effect lapses have on the language.

Next the students begin a brief study of some of the characteristics of Indo-European languages and English in particular. They briefly discuss the Great Vowel Shift and Grimm's Law. They then compare a given sentence in many languages to determine similarities and differences.

The students are introduced to historical change in the English language by recordings of selections from the Bible in Old English, Middle English, and Early

Modern English. They then are asked a series of questions about the differences between the language of the three recordings to lead them to recognize spelling, morphological, and syntactic changes that have occurred. At first, when they are told that each recording is an example of English from a different historical period, they may express disbelief, but questions will lead them to recognize similarities as well as differences. Finally, they are given a list of general or specific topics on language. From the list they choose a subject to research and conclude their activities by writing a paper about this subject. Papers of interest are dittoed and distributed to the class.

When the unit is finished the students will have been exposed to a broad realistic view of language. They will have begun to understand how their language functions and will have begun to develop attitudes toward language that are consistent with the discoveries of linguists. They will also have begun to realize that they play a very important part in determining what their language is.

SYNTAX

If we are to teach syntax for its own sake, because it is of value as a humanistic study, then our most important objective is to teach the understanding of how words work together. Ruth Strickland's study The Language of Elementary School Children proves that when children enter school they know and use all the major syntactic patters of oral English. Why not call upon this ability to use the language to help the student objectify ideas about how the language works? Let the student be his own linguist. Let him collect samples of language and make his own generalizations about language. Let him set up hypotheses about how his language works, and ask him to test and revise the hypotheses. Perhaps such an exploratory approach is the most valuable aspect of language study. The burden of proof will be on the student and not upon the teacher. He can be highly motivated to draw conclusions and set up rules. And he will, perhaps, feel free to explore and experiment with his language--to use it as effectively and efficiently as he can because he realizes that he is the master of it, and not it of him. Such an inductive study can begin and proceed through three steps: 1) scrambled sentences, 2) student sentences, and 3) omitted words.

1) Scrambled sentences such as the following are presented to students to demonstrate that while words have meanings individually, they must appear in particular orders if they are to have meaning collectively.

a. girl the frog over then jumped high.
b. all the helped fathers boys day the long.
c. small built the winter for a trappers the cabin.

2) In the next step of the sequence the teacher asks the students to compose the shortest statements they can. As the students write, the teacher can walk around the room and select the sentences which will best suit the purposes of the lesson. He can then ask students who have written sentences conforming to basic patterns to write them on the board. (At this point the teacher can feel free to use the word sentence even though the students do not have a clear idea of what it means and may write phrases in response to it.) Sentences such as the following serve well for the exercise:

The boy runs.
He threw the ball.
The girl gave him a book.

The students now have sentences of three basic patterns with which they can work. The next step is to omit one word at a time and make lists of words which will fit into the blank spaces.

3) Omitting words and supplying other words to fill the blanks should indicate that only certain kinds of words can fill particular blank spaces (slots). Students can make lists of words which will fit into the blanks in patterns such as the following:

1. The _____ stands still.
2. The man _____ quietly.
3. The _____ man stands on the corner.

After collecting lists of words which fit the blanks in the various patterns, the students can determine whether or not any of the words will fit in the blanks of the other patterns. Undoubtedly some of them will. At this point the students can begin to make generalizations about the words which fit into the various blanks and what happens to them when they change from one position to another.

Syntax may also be taught in the hope of improving students' writing. How best to do this is the problem. Experience has shown that the use of models and patterns is very effective in that the student can learn to write specific structures immediately. What effect such practice will have on the syntax of the students' writing beyond the immediate situation remains to be determined. Nevertheless the practices of discovering what structures a student does and does not use, instructing him in the use of structures with which he needs help through the use of models and patterns, and making him aware of the changes and additions to meaning which the use of such structures can bring about hold great promise.

As a part of the unit on syntax such instruction begins by asking the students to examine model sentences in which certain patterns are apparent and by asking students to add details to the basic sentence patterns they have already studied, expanding one part of the pattern at a time through the use of various devices.

The students should examine the ways in which they can expand the various parts of a sentence by the use of modifiers such as adjectives, adjective clauses, adverb clauses, prepositional phrases, and participial phrases. They should examine the possibilities of using verbal phrases and noun clauses in subject and object positions. They should objectify and imitate such patterns as the parallel structure and the appositive. This practical phase of a unit on syntax should not lead to the mechanical reporduction of various syntactic structures. Rather, it should make the student aware of the many syntactic possibilities of the written language, should give him practice and discretion in the use of these various structures. If the study of syntax can accomplish these goals or aid significantly in their accomplishment, then it is not simply a humanistic study but one of vital significance to the development of the student as a writer.